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Collection and dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistics Division

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session. It describes ongoing activities and recent developments in the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division with respect to data collection and dissemination. Also discussed are the initiatives taken by the Statistics Division to better coordinate data-collection activities by international agencies, to provide easy access to the United Nations system data and to facilitate the exchange of experience among developing countries with respect to data dissemination policies and practices. Points for discussion are included in paragraph 22.

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I. Introduction

1. The management of global databases in the areas of demographic and social statistics, national accounts, and trade, industry, energy and environment statistics is one of the pillars of the work of the United Nations Statistics Division. It is an integral part of the overall programme of the Division and is closely related to its methodological work and technical cooperation activities. The Statistics Division reports periodically to the Statistical Commission on this segment of its work, doing so most recently in 2002 and 2003. This document, provided at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,[1] includes a brief update on recent developments with respect to the data work of the Statistics Division, and, in the second section, goes beyond simply describing the Division's own data processes to discuss its role in supporting the global data flows. In particular, it reviews initiatives taken by the Division to better coordinate data-collection activities by international agencies, to provide easy access to United Nations system data and to facilitate the exchange of experience among developing countries with respect to data dissemination policies and practices.

II. The United Nations Statistics Division data programme

A. Data collection

2. The general mandate for the Statistics Division to collect and disseminate statistics in specific subject matter areas dates back to the early years of the United Nations. The specific mandate for the recurrent statistical print publications is given every two years by the Statistical Commission as part of the approval of the overall Division workplan. Currently, the Division disseminates the information received from countries through its questionnaires in a variety of print publications and online databases. The list of Division questionnaires or data requests to be sent to countries in 2008 is presented in annex I. To assist our data providers in planning and monitoring the requests for data that they receive, this information will also be made available through a calendar posted on the Division website, with links to each of the questionnaires.

3. When the Statistics Division last reported to the Commission on its data work in 2003 (see E/CN.3/2003/26), a detailed description of all Division data collections was presented in the annex of that report. Furthermore, an assessment of the quality dimensions of the Division databases with respect to periodicity, timeliness, geographical coverage, response rates, sources of the data collected, data-sharing agreements, collection instruments, metadata, data processing and editing procedures was included. Basically, that report still accurately describes the core of the Statistics Division data-collection activities. Some of the recent additions and/or changes in the Division data-collection programme are as follows:

- A new regular data collection covering trade in services statistics has been introduced, starting in 2006, based on a request by the Statistical Commission;

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I, sect. A.

- A special initiative has been undertaken in national accounts to increase electronic communication, which has country coverage;
- A new housing questionnaire to be sent to countries at the end of the year is being finalized;
- The data collection for industrial commodity production statistics is now based on a revised United Nations list of industrial products that was established in 2005;
- A common data quality framework to be developed based on the existing quality procedures in the various subject matter areas is under consideration.

B. Data dissemination

4. The Statistics Division disseminates the data it compiles in its printed publications and electronic outputs as well as on the Internet. A full listing of all statistical products for the 2008-2009 biennium is presented in annex II. The general dissemination policy for United Nations publications has been established by the United Nations Publications Board. According to official policy, publications are distributed free of charge to Member States missions to the United Nations, the United Nations libraries and United Nations depository libraries and Statistics Division partners in the global statistical system, i.e. national and international statistical services. Sale of Division publications is the responsibility of the Sales Section of the United Nations Secretariat. Statistical products continue to be among the largest revenue earners in the Sales Section.

5. With respect to pricing policies, a dilemma exists between meeting a legitimate official and public need for free access to information and maintaining the potential for earning revenues through sales, as mandated by United Nations publication policies. Revenue potential of statistical products has to be balanced against the increasing insistence by Member States that statistical products be made available free of charge. Member States argue that the Statistics Division should not charge the public for data which are provided free by their statistical offices. Technicians in the national statistical offices of the developing countries depend upon methodological manuals and handbooks for their work, but typically cannot afford to purchase them. Data customers have repeatedly pointed out that the databases produced by the Statistics Division, which contain global development information, are a "public good". In fact, the increasing use of the Internet for the dissemination of data, and for making methodological publications widely available, has allowed the Statistics Division to provide its users easier access to its statistical products.

6. It was precisely this concern to provide users quick and free access to the various Statistics Division databases that motivated the major innovation in data dissemination practices of the Division in the form of the project "Statistics as a Public Good", which was launched at the end of 2005 with Statistics Sweden and the Gapminder Foundation, with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Collaboration Agency. The objective of the project was to develop a new online Data Access System (UNdata) by which the Statistics Division would increase the dissemination, use and understanding of global statistics.

7. The project built on the United Nations Common Database, developing a data access system that met the Division vision of providing an integrated information resource with current, relevant and reliable statistics free of charge for all. The underlying philosophy was to create a powerful data search engine that would allow the maintenance of a federated database system, and at the same time would give access to all Division databases through an Internet-based single entry point, thus enabling the user to retrieve and use multidisciplinary statistical data. A more detailed description of the United Nations data portal, including its data visualization features and the management of metadata, will be provided to the Commission in a background document.

8. The first version of the United Nations data portal was completed and tested in 2007. User feedback from a soft launch to the international statistical community was overwhelmingly positive. The public launch of the United Nations data portal is planned for early 2008. It should be noted that the dissemination of data through the Internet has permitted the Statistics Division to establish a more direct communication channel with users. Since most Division print publications have been provided to the public by intermediaries such as librarians and documentalists or sold by commercial wholesalers, it used to be more difficult to identify actual users and learn about the use to which they put the data they acquired. Nowadays, though, information about the users as well as their opinions and expectations can be sought through user satisfaction surveys via the Internet.

III. Initiatives to support the global data flow

9. In addition to its own data production for the databases for which the Statistics Division is the global custodian, the Division also supports the global data flow to help to ensure efficient transmission of data produced at the national level to a variety of global users. This coordination function is primarily derived from the role of Division Secretariat to both the Statistical Commission and the inter-agency coordination process (Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, previously the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee). This section briefly reviews three areas in which the Division is currently active, namely, the coordination of data collection among international agencies, the extension of the United Nations data portal to include United Nations system data and the facilitation of the exchange of country experiences in the area of data dissemination.

A. Coordination of data collection among international agencies

10. The issue of coordination of data-collection activities and, thus, the reduction of the country reporting burden, has been a longstanding concern which appeared on the agenda of the United Nations inter-agency mechanism — the then-ACC Subcommittee on Statistics — almost since its inception. For example, in 1974, at its eighth session, the Subcommittee had agreed that all new questionnaires would be circulated to its members for comments (Coordination/R.1026, para. 106). Towards the end of the 1980s, the primary concern was with ad hoc statistical inquiries to countries from non-statistical units. The Subcommittee brought this to the attention of the higher-level organizational committee of the ACC, which decided at its October 1987 session that a clear policy should be developed in each

organization of the United Nations system requiring that the statistical unit of an organization be consulted prior to sending any statistical inquiry to a country.

11. In 1990, following a request by the Subcommittee to prepare a report on the statistical subject areas on which the statistical offices of the agencies collected data from countries, the office then known as the United Nations Statistical Office started to prepare an inventory of statistical data-collection activities by all statistical agencies. The inventory was later presented to and endorsed with satisfaction by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.[2] The scope of the questionnaire inventory was extended over time to include over 400 data-collection activities by about 20 international agencies. For each data-collection activity, the inventory included information on the name of the questionnaire, the agency collecting the information, a short description of the questionnaire content, a unique identification number, the identification of the Government agency to which the inquiry was sent, its periodicity and date of dispatch as well as the mode of collection.

12. However, over time, questions arose about the usefulness of the inventory. In 1997, the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Statistical Activities reported to the Commission (see E/CN.3/1997/25, para. 4) that the inventory was in fact not a very effective tool for coordination for a number of reasons: (a) the inventory was not complete, since, for instance, ad hoc data collections were left out, (b) the information contained in the inventory sometimes had a time of two years lag, (c) the inventory was not specific enough about which items were actually being collected and (d) there was no evidence that the inventory was actually used or consulted, especially prior to the taking of decisions on new questionnaires. As the maintenance of the inventory was very resource-intensive, the Statistics Division ultimately stopped updating it in 1997.

13. As Member States continued to voice concerns about the insufficient coordination of statistical data collection by international agencies, the Division reported in 2002 to the Statistical Commission (see E/CN.3/2002/30) that it had sent out an inquiry to national statistical offices requesting them to identify specific examples of duplicate data requests by international organizations. Responses were received from 11 countries, and their replies were analysed and addressed by the then Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee for Statistical Activities. In 2003, the Statistical Commission endorsed[3] the approach taken by the United Nations Statistics Division and the newly formed Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities regarding reviewing and resolving specific cases of data-collection duplication, and requested the Statistics Division and the Committee to continue working on this issue and to report on progress made. The Commission also encouraged Member States to continue to report instances of duplication of data collection at the international level to the United Nations Statistics Division.

14. This mandate given to the Statistics Division to act as a facilitator, through the CCSA, is still the official mechanism of the international statistical community for addressing duplication incidents. No concrete cases of duplication have recently been reported to the Statistics Division. International agencies have certainly

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8* (E/1995/28), chap. XIV, para. 89.

[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 4* (E/2003/24), chap. V, sect. E, para. 11 (c) and (d).

cooperated, for instance, through the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative, in order to create an environment where data exchange is effective and the reporting burden on countries can potentially be reduced significantly. Nonetheless, it may be useful to restate the Commission's policy and encourage countries to bring instances of duplication of data collection to the attention of the Statistics Division.

B. United Nations data portal as a tool for easy access to United Nations system data

15. The position of the Statistics Division at the centre of the international statistical system presents it with both an advantage and a challenge when it comes to data dissemination. The advantage lies in the ability to obtain data from many national and international sources; the challenge lies in the need to process all the data received, which requires a highly efficient management and dissemination mechanism.

16. From the beginning, the United Nations data portal was designed in such a manner to allow for scaling up to include a wide range of United Nations system data. In fact, early close cooperation with experts from partner agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, whose cooperation is gratefully acknowledged, showed that the system was flexible enough to accommodate large data sets provided by United Nations partners. As the portal is based on the principle of federated databases, the data, as well as the metadata of partner agencies, are made accessible to users in their original form, with full source attribution. In this context, it is important to stress that the source agency retains full control of its data as well as full responsibility for the quality of the data.

17. As of November 2007, the United Nations data portal already included more than 50 million data items provided by six agencies. The Division presented the United Nations data portal and its functionalities at a meeting of United Nations system agencies in September 2007, and it was widely welcomed as a powerful tool which offers the users access to the broad universe of United Nations system data. Over the coming months, it can be expected that the United Nations data portal will continuously expand as additional data sets are linked with the system.

18. While at this stage the system is simply a provider of access services, it can also be expected that in the medium term it could contribute to the improvement of the data quality. By making it possible for users to retrieve data from a variety of sources at the same time, it will increase the analytical potential of the data by possibly highlighting the need for consistency and plausibility checks, thereby creating pressure on the various data providers to harmonize their data to the extent possible. This can even be taken one step further in the medium term by including national databases in the system, allowing the users to eventually retrieve and compare data from both national and international sources at the same time.

C. Exchange of country experiences with respect to data dissemination policies and practices

19. Cooperation among countries is fairly strong in the area of data production, and the professionals in the various subject matter areas, such as census managers and national accountants, have established close, global networks of communication. However, the same cannot be said about the area of data dissemination. Under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians there is a steering group on statistical dissemination and communication, but managers responsible for data dissemination in developing countries often tend to come up with their own specific national solutions, without the benefit of sharing experiences.

20. In order to provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of experience on the dissemination of data, the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with the Department of Statistics of Malaysia and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency organized a seminar on emerging trends and issues in data dissemination in Putrajaya, Malaysia, in August 2007. Thirteen experts responsible for data dissemination in their national statistical institutes, representing countries from all regions of the world, participated in the seminar. Several topics were covered, for example, at a discussion of general trends in data dissemination, where country representatives presented the current stage of their dissemination strategies and explained the ways in which they target different audiences and customize the presentation of their products for a wide variety of user groups. Communication of metadata, pricing policies and data visualization techniques were some other specific areas discussed.

21. Two key conclusions emerged from the exchanges: (a) that there is a general need to move from data dissemination to data communication and therefore countries will have to develop comprehensive communication strategies; (b) that there is considerable scope for countries to benefit from the exchange of experiences at the international level. The United Nations Statistics Division plans to provide such opportunities by organizing at least one or two more such seminars at a regional level in the coming year.

IV. Points for discussion

22. The Commission is invited to:

- Review the areas of the Statistics Division data collection
- Support Division efforts to create the United Nations data portal and encourage United Nations system partners to cooperate in this project
- Reconfirm the Division mandate to act as facilitator to address country concerns with respect to duplicate data requests, and encourage Member States to bring these cases to the attention of the Division
- Discuss experiences of countries and agencies in developing and implementing new dissemination tools and policies, including pricing policies; and recommend priority areas in the field of data dissemination, where countries and the international agencies can cooperate most usefully

Annex I

United Nations Statistics Division questionnaires or data requests to be sent to countries in 2008

Subject	*Questionnaire title or data request name*	*How dispatched*	*UNSD outputs in which the collected data will appear*	*Periodicity*	*When requests are expected to be sent in 2008*
Demog and Social	UN DYB questionnaire on population estimates	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual	December 2008
Demog and Social	UN DYB questionnaire on vital statistics	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual	December 2008
Demog and Social	UN DYB population census questionnaire on economic characteristics	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual (first sent in the year after a census took place, then annually until response received)	August 2008
Demog and Social	UN DYB population census questionnaire on household characteristics	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual (first sent in the year after a census took place, then annually until response received)	August 2008
Demog and Social	UN DYB population census questionnaire on general characteristics	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual (first sent in the year after a census took place, then annually until response received)	December 2008
Demog and Social	Trial UN DYB questionnaire on housing	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual	December 2008
Demog and Social	UN DYB questionnaire on international travel and migration statistics	electronic version sent by e-mail	*Demographic Yearbook*	Annual	December 2008
Energy	energy statistics questionnaire	pre-filled questionnaire in Excel sent by e-mail	Energy Statistics Database *Energy Statistics Yearbook Energy Balances and Electricity Profiles*	Annual	October 2008
Environment	questionnaire on environment statistics	pre-filled questionnaire in Excel format sent by e-mail	Environment Statistics Database Main Environmental Indicators Country Snapshots	Biennial; March of even years	March 2008
General	monthly bulletin of statistics questionnaire	by e-mail, fax and regular mail	*Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, MBS Online, *Statistical Yearbook*	Monthly	January through December 2008 (2nd week of each month)

Subject	*Questionnaire title or data request name*	*How dispatched*	*UNSD outputs in which the collected data will appear*	*Periodicity*	*When requests are expected to be sent in 2008*
Transport	Transport questionnaire for *Statistical Yearbook* (3 questionnaires: motor vehicles in use, railways, international maritime)	pre-filled questionnaire sent by e-mail and fax	*Statistical Yearbook*, *World Statistics Pocketbook*, UN Common Database	Annual	January 2008
Industry	Industrial commodity production statistics questionnaire	pre-filled questionnaire sent by e-mail	Industrial Commodity Statistics Database, *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook*, *Statistical Yearbook*	Annual	January 2008
Industry	Index numbers of industrial production questionnaire	pre-filled questionnaire in Excel format sent by e-mail	Index Numbers of Industrial Production Database, *MBS*, *Statistical Yearbook*	Quarterly	February, May, Aug. and Nov. 2008 (quarterly)
National Accounts	National accounts questionnaire	by e-mail or regular mail	*National Accounts Statistics: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables*	Annual	October 2008
Trade	International merchandise trade statistics collection in electronic format	by e-mail and fax	UN Comtrade and the *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*	Annual	February 2008
Trade	Questionnaire on distributive trade statistics	by regular mail and electronically		Annual	Second quarter 2008
Trade	Statistics on international trade in services collection in electronic format	by e-mail and fax	UN Service Trade and the *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*	Annual	June 2008

Annex II

List of data publications under the United Nations Statistics Division 2008-2009 work programme

Recurrent publications:

- *Demographic Yearbook*, 2006 and 2007 editions (print) (2)
- *Demographic Yearbook*, special topic (2)
- *Vital Statistics Report* (4)
- Website on demographic and social statistics, quarterly update (8)
- Website on social indicators, twice-yearly update (4)
- Website on vital statistics, monthly update (24)
- *National Accounts Statistics: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables*, 2005 and 2006 editions (print) (2)
- *National Accounts Statistics: Analysis of Main Aggregates*, 2005 and 2006 editions (print) (2)
- Website on national accounts, annual update (2)
- *Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook* (2)
- Website on industry statistics, annual update (2)
- *Energy Statistics Yearbook*, 2006 and 2007 editions (print) (2)
- *Energy Balances and Electricity Profiles*, 2006 and 2007 (print) (2)
- Energy statistics online database (1)
- Website on energy statistics, annual update (2)
- *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*, vols. I and II (print) (2)
- An online annex to the *Yearbook of International Trade Statistics*, vols. I and II (2008 and 2009)
- Website on international trade statistics (2)
- Comtrade databases on international merchandise trade statistics (Internet annual update) (2)
- Services trade database on statistics of international trade in services (Internet) (2)
- Website of the task force on statistics of international trade in services, annual update (2)
- Environmental country profiles, 2008 and 2009 (2)
- Website on environment statistics, annual update (2)
- *Statistical Yearbook*, 2008 and 2009 editions (print) (2)
- *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, 2008-2009 (print and Internet) (48)

- *World Statistics in Brief*, 2008 and 2009 editions (print and Internet) (4)
- Millennium Development Goals report and statistical annex for the Office of the Secretary-General (2)
- Millennium Development Goals indicators database, update (2)
- Glossy report on the Millennium Development Goals (2)
- Website on the Millennium Development Goals (2)
- Website of the Common Database, quarterly update (8)

Note: The number in brackets indicates the number of products for the biennium.

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Items for discussion and decision: common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata

Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the present report on an initiative to foster common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata. The report is presented to the Commission for discussion.

The report reviews activities related to the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative and includes a proposal for its recognition as the international standard for data and metadata exchange.

The Commission may wish to express its views on progress achieved by the initiative and the way forward. Points for discussion by the Commission are contained in paragraph 20.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report on common open standards for the exchange and sharing of socio-economic data and metadata: the SDMX initiative*

I. Introduction

1. In 2001, the Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, Eurostat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations joined together to develop more efficient processes for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata within the current scope of their collective activities. The World Bank joined the initial group of sponsor organizations in 2003.

2. The goal of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative is to foster standards and guidelines that allow national and international organizations to gain efficiencies and avoid duplication of work in the area of data and metadata exchange through the use of modern technology. The above sponsor organizations have been making progress over the past few years, especially through the increasing involvement of international and national statistical agencies. SDMX builds on existing and emerging technical exchange protocols and on the content-oriented efforts of statisticians who have worked on those long-standing issues in various domains and forums. More details can be found on the SDMX website (see http://www.sdmx.org).

3. The Statistical Commission received an initial report on the initiative during its thirty-third session in 2002.[1] A follow-up report was submitted to the Commission at its thirty-fourth session in 2003,[2] focusing on the launch of projects jointly undertaken by the sponsoring institutions. Subsequent reports in 2004[3] and 2005[4] highlighted further progress; and a special outreach event about SDMX was attended by about 50 delegates to the 2006 Commission session. The report in 2007[5] noted that SDMX technical standards and content-oriented guidelines had started to become a focal point for improving the exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata in various national and international forums. It also noted that advances had reflected the orientation of sponsoring organizations to ensure open involvement of national and international statistical institutions in shaping future SDMX developments and implementations. The present report reviews SDMX activities and includes a proposal for recognition of SDMX as the international standard for data and metadata exchange. In particular, section II summarizes SDMX benefits, section III highlights SDMX implementations and costs, section IV takes up fostering of capacity-building and section V outlines conclusions and a recommendation to give recognition to SDMX, thereby fostering further

* The report has been jointly prepared by the Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank.

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 4* (E/2002/24), chap. VI. See also http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2002.htm.

[2] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2003.htm.

[3] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2004.htm.

[4] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2005.htm.

[5] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2007.htm.

collaboration and steps forward for the global community of statistical producers, disseminators and users.

II. Benefits of SDMX

4. SDMX consists of a number of products:

(a) Technical standards (information model, formats, architecture);[6]

(b) Content-oriented guidelines (cross-domain statistical concepts, subject-matter domains list, metadata common vocabulary);

(c) Implementation tools (e.g. creating data and metadata structures, transforming formats, data entry and registry services).

5. The benefits of SDMX have been spelled out in various reports for the Statistical Commission and for the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities. To recapitulate briefly, SDMX products:

(a) Are applicable to all domains of statistics;

(b) Can improve efficiencies in the exchange and dissemination of data and metadata;

(c) Can be used by national and international agencies as key building blocks in internal statistical information technology systems used for the collection, compilation, storage and searching of statistical information;

(d) Are neutral in terms of underlying commercial technologies or their applicability in various statistical domains;

(e) Avoid duplication of efforts in developing and maintaining standards for the processing of statistical information;

(f) Can potentially reduce the cost of developing statistical software systems;

(g) Pool the expertise and resources working on data and metadata issues in sponsoring organizations and involve other experts at the national and international levels through an open consultation process;

(h) Are anchored in internationally recognized bodies such as the International Organization for Standardization for technical specifications and existing groups leading statistical methodologies for domain-specific content-oriented guidelines;

(i) Can be applied in various exchange modes, including those built on data "push" as well as "pull" models;

(j) Can potentially reduce duplication of reporting by facilitating data-sharing arrangements through data "hubs" or portals organized by several organizations in cooperation.

[6] Recognized by the International Organization for Standardization as Technical Specification 17369-SDMX.

6. Those benefits are real and are reflected in the many applications and projects that are in progress or are already making use of SDMX, at both national and international levels. The latter include:

(a) SDMX Open Data Interchange (Eurostat);

(b) Joint Comtrade Statistics System (Statistics Division and OECD);

(c) National Accounts World Wide Exchange (OECD);

(d) Joint External Debt Hub (Bank for International Settlements, IMF, OECD, World Bank);

(e) Eurosystem Joint Dissemination (European Central Bank and euro area national central banks);

(f) Statistical Data Warehouse (European Central Bank);

(g) Metadata Repositories (IMF);

(h) Education Statistics Hub (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, OECD, Eurostat);

(i) CountrySTAT Hub for Agricultural Statistics (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations);

(j) Labour Statistics Hub (International Labour Organization, OECD, Eurostat);

(k) Millennium Development Goals Hub (Statistics Division).

7. Recognition of SDMX achievements has also led to endorsement or adoption by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, the European Union Statistical Programme Committee, the OECD Statistics Committee and the Statistics Committee of the European System of Central Banks. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities agreed that it would itself put forward SDMX to the Statistical Commission for consideration as a standard that it had adopted, stressing the importance of assisting countries to develop their capacity to adopt the standards. Support from the Statistical Programme Committee will be instrumental in achieving the expected benefits of using SDMX within the European Statistical System that have been identified. The OECD Statistical Committee agreed to support SDMX as the world standard for international exchange and sharing of statistical information. Following agreements by its Statistics Committee, the European System of Central Banks has been using SDMX in dissemination activities (e.g. Eurosystem Joint Dissemination) and, moreover, SDMX is already the unique standard used in statistical data-sharing between national central banks and the European Central Bank.

III. Implementations and costs of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative

8. While the benefits of SDMX may be relatively easy to explain, questions have been raised as to the cost of implementing international standards and guidelines. National statistical agencies are understandably reluctant to embrace a new set of standards if they are costly to implement.

9. It should first be pointed out that the development, maintenance and dissemination of SDMX technical standards and guidelines is done by the sponsoring international organizations as a public good.[7] SDMX products are made available free of charge and without restrictions on use. The sponsoring organizations also foster the development and maintenance of free implementation tools, by public-sector as well as commercial organizations. Experts on statistical data and metadata exchange are invited to provide comments on, and suggestions for improving, the various SDMX products. Any major change in technical standards and content-oriented guidelines is carried out through an open consultation process announced on the SDMX website and carried forward by the sponsor organizations.

10. The full benefits of SDMX are achieved when they are complemented by domain-specific guidelines, i.e. data and metadata structure definitions and code lists for individual statistical domains such as national accounts, balance of payments, external debt or agricultural, labour and education statistics. SDMX fosters the development of such domain-specific implementations through existing international statistical groups that are responsible for international methodological standards in their respective statistical areas. It also promotes an open consultation process for the development and maintenance of those domain-specific SDMX implementations. The SDMX website will be providing an overview of that content-oriented work.

11. There are many ways in which international and national statistical agencies, as well as other compilers and users of statistical information in the private and public sector, can implement SDMX. In all cases they can be considered "business as usual" for technical experts and statisticians. Indeed, any statistical project will require the development of an information model and a structure for data and metadata; that is irrespective of whether the project involves the construction or adaptation of a database, data warehouse, data exchange platform or web application. To some extent it could be argued that all technical experts and statisticians have been using SDMX-like solutions in the past. SDMX provides essential building blocks for that work, based on a common language, shared experience and developing best practice, thereby potentially saving experts and statisticians considerable development and maintenance time.

12. The implementation of SDMX does not require a "big bang" approach and a need to change information technology systems or code structures. Implementation can be done gradually over time and at the pace dictated by institutions' own priorities. It is also possible to map existing solutions to SDMX standards or to design interfaces for existing systems, using a growing set of freely available tools to facilitate developments.

13. Early in 2007, the SDMX sponsoring institutions organized a global conference, hosted by the World Bank, to explain developments of SDMX and to illustrate its implementation by international and national agencies in the context of their own goals and priorities. The various case studies presented showed the gradual implementation of SDMX through a number of projects:

[7] A memorandum of understanding among the seven international sponsoring institutions was signed and published on the SDMX website (http://sdmx.org/?p=36) in 2007.

(a) Individual international organizations are introducing SDMX in their data exchange with national agencies for a variety of statistical domains;

(b) Groups of international organizations, through existing or new collaboration arrangements, are applying SDMX;

(c) Existing and new domain groups are working to develop SDMX-conformant data and metadata structures;

(d) National statistical agencies are turning to SDMX for their various projects.[8]

14. The cost of implementing SDMX is embedded in those different projects and it is therefore difficult to separate the actual net cost of introducing or using SDMX. Practical experiences have provided growing evidence to the effect that the relative costs for technology and subject-matter domains work are minor (as mentioned above, information models and data and metadata structure definitions need to be developed anyway). The most critical areas are seen as capacity-building for staff to better understand the SDMX framework and how to get full leverage out of applying it.

IV. Fostering capacity-building

15. So far, SDMX sponsoring organizations have promoted capacity-building through various initiatives:

(a) The posting of various technical manuals and user guidelines on the user-friendly SDMX website (http://www.sdmx.org);

(b) The provision of information on that website regarding other public-sector and commercial organizations making available free SDMX implementation tools (some tool providers offer discussion forums or practical guidelines);

(c) The posting of relevant information on SDMX implementations, including contact details, on the SDMX website (national and international statistical agencies are encouraged to keep the SDMX secretariat informed of implementation projects and to share information through the website);

(d) "Learning by doing" in the context of their own projects, individually or collaboratively,[9] which in many cases also involve their national constituencies in a practical way;

(e) The active marketing of SDMX through existing international groups and meetings at which SDMX sponsors are represented;

[8] Further details about presentations are available from the SDMX website (http://sdmx.org/?p=22#more-22), including country reports on developments in Australia, Mexico, the Philippines, the United States of America and Viet Nam. Other presentations provided an overview of SDMX developments, demonstrated practical implementations and provided introductory capacity-building in both technical and content-oriented aspects of SDMX. Nearly 200 technical and subject-matter experts from national and international organizations around the world participated.

[9] Some projects are so-called SDMX-recognized projects since they are identified as potentially yielding major improvements in SDMX products.

(f) The organization of occasional conferences and satellite workshops such as the global conference organized early in 2007 at the World Bank;

(g) The organization of training activities aimed at international and national statistical institutions dealing with the SDMX products and their domain-specific implementation.

16. The SDMX sponsors are also thinking of additional ways in which the implementation of SDMX could be promoted. The following will be considered:

(a) The organization of regional conferences and adjoining workshops along the lines of the global event organized early in 2007 in Washington, D.C.;

(b) The sponsoring of additional meetings hosted by national and international organizations to explain and illustrate SDMX in the context of their specific projects or domains in which they are actively involved;

(c) The development of new arrangements for SDMX capacity-building, for instance through the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century and the Development Gateway Foundation (e.g. a virtual statistical system).

17. Those additional initiatives would be expected to attract greater participation if the Statistical Commission were to give recognition to SDMX achievements in fostering global standards and guidelines for statistical data and metadata exchange.

V. Conclusions

18. SDMX technical standards and content-oriented guidelines have demonstrated their potential for improving the exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata using modern technology.

19. A number of implementations are in progress and endorsements of SDMX reflect a widening range of international and national statistical agencies.

20. The Commission may wish to discuss the achievements of SDMX and the way forward, with a view to giving recognition to SDMX as the standard for data and metadata exchange.

21. The Commission may wish to explicitly encourage efforts to:

(a) Further involve national and international agencies in their contribution of comments and requirements that can enhance the relevance of SDMX developments for statistical systems around the world;

(b) Continue outreach via the SDMX website, helping to broaden awareness-building and prevent duplication of efforts within the community of statistical producers, disseminators and users;

(c) Increase opportunities to benefit statistical systems and interchanges of data and metadata through freely available tools and common approaches;

(d) Foster capacity-building programmes, especially for developing countries, aimed at strengthening the know-how of technical experts and subject-matter domain experts, helping them to better understand SDMX and how its framework of technical standards and content-oriented guidelines can facilitate more effective and efficient statistical systems.

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Report of the Economic Commission for Africa

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development in Africa. The report highlights issues and challenges facing African countries in enhancing their statistical capacity. It gives an overview of ongoing initiatives by African stakeholders aimed at overcoming those challenges. The initiatives include the setting up of a statistical commission for Africa (Statcom-Africa) and the African Statistical Coordination Committee. The report also elaborates on a way forward and on the role the Economic Commission for Africa can play in addressing the challenges. The Commission may wish to comment on ongoing efforts aimed at boosting the statistical development of African countries and organizations. It might also wish to call upon all stakeholders, including development partners, to scale up their support for statistical development initiatives on the continent, namely through the African Centre for Statistics. Actions to be taken by the Commission are contained in paragraph 25 of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.
** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development in Africa

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I. Introduction

1. The last decades of the last millennium witnessed a tremendous increase in the demand for quality statistics in African countries. This unprecedented increase in the demand emanated mainly from a number of national, regional and international initiatives aimed at improving the economic, social and political conditions of African people. These include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Millennium Development Goals, the poverty reduction strategies, subregional economic and/or monetary integration frameworks and other specific sectoral frameworks. As a result, African national statistical systems and subregional and regional organizations dealing with statistics and statistical development have been not only challenged but also given the opportunity, inter alia, to raise public awareness on the importance of statistics in the development of the continent and in harnessing national, subregional, regional and international resources in building the capacities of African countries to meet the increased demand in quality statistics emanating from their development agenda.

2. The present report sets out some of the main challenges facing African stakeholders in statistical development, as well as some of the recent initiatives aimed at addressing them. The initiatives include the revamping of the statistical functions within major regional organizations, namely, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission; the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa; the African Statistical Coordination Committee; the Statistical Commission for Africa; the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development; and the African Statistics Charter. Furthermore, the present report elaborates on the role ECA can play in addressing the challenges and actions to be taken by the Statistical Commission.

II. Challenges facing African national statistical systems

3. The challenges facing African national statistical systems and other stakeholders in African statistical development are numerous. They include the following:

(a) Low participation by African countries in international meetings and city groups where international standards, methodologies and classifications are discussed and approved. This has resulted in African specificities not being adequately catered to in the said standards, methodologies and classifications and has, in some cases, raised concerns about their relevance to African countries. The issue is how to activate effective African participation in international meetings and discussions;

(b) Prioritizing statistics. The role of statistics is, by and large, not a priority in national development processes and among donor support programmes to countries. At the national level, inadequate political commitment to statistical development has translated into low priority for statistics, inappropriate profiles of national statistical offices in government hierarchy and concomitant under-funding for statistical development. In addition, policymakers in many donor organizations have not been made more aware of the critical nature of statistics in supporting evidence-based policymaking and monitoring. The issues include: (a) how to scale-

up advocacy for mainstreaming statistics into national development processes, in particular into the poverty reduction strategies; and (b) how to give a higher priority to statistics either as a sectoral activity or as a larger part of priority sector programmes of donor agencies;

(c) Lack of (or inappropriate) long-term planning for statistical development. The Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics urges all poor developing countries (many of them in Africa) to design a national strategy for the development of statistics by the end of 2006 and to start implementation by 2007. There are still countries where a national strategy for the development of statistics has not been designed; there are also countries where the strategy has been designed but implementation has been constrained by lack of adequate resources. The issue is how to ensure that all countries have an appropriately designed strategy and the resources to implement it;

(d) Statistical capacity. Statistical capacity is critical for long-term sustainability of national statistical systems and activities. Many African countries still lack the capacity to undertake core statistical activities. The situation is worse in line ministries than in national statistical offices. Training institutions are not producing enough graduates to meet existing demand for trained personnel. There are also concerns that the curricula of training institutions, in particular universities, do not include "official statistics" or practical-oriented subjects or management-related subjects; that the teaching of statistics continues to be undertaken from the supply side in spite of the overwhelming need to also address demand side issues; and that there is insufficient training on data analysis, presentation and dissemination. The issues include: (a) how to meet urgent demand for trained personnel across government sectors; and (b) how to ensure relevance and practicality of training programmes;

(e) International Comparison Programme (ICP) for Africa (ICP-Africa). Many African countries participated in ICP-Africa (2002-2007), which was coordinated by the African Development Bank. The Programme assisted participating countries in strengthening their economic statistics and compilation of consumer price indexes, gross domestic product (GDP) and related indexes; production of purchasing power parities; and general statistical development, including the design of the national strategy for the development of statistics. The issue is how to continue the ICP-Africa initiated activities beyond 2007, when the ICP world programme ends;

(f) The 2010 round of population and housing censuses. Some 17 African countries (about 30 per cent of the total) did not participate in the 2000 round. As a result, about 50 per cent of the African population was not enumerated during the round of censuses; in addition, outdated data or population projections are used in many countries to inform national development agendas and to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As preparations for the 2010 round gain momentum, there are about 10 African countries which may have serious problems participating in the round. The issue is how to ensure that all African countries galvanize themselves and participate in the 2010 round;

(g) Coordination. Coordination of statistical activities and programmes is essential to achieving synergy, to avoiding duplication of effort and wasting resources and to improving data quality. In many countries, coordination among stakeholders, such as between data producers and users, among data producers and between data producers and research/training institutions, is not adequate. While

there is good coordination among donors at the international level, the same is not the case at the country level. The issue is how to create and enhance coordination mechanisms at the country level among key stakeholders, including donors.

4. To accelerate the pace of statistical development in the region, it is imperative that stakeholders strive to create greater awareness among data users, in particular planners, policymakers and decision makers, about the strategic importance of statistics in their work, particularly in evidence-based macro-economic management, policy decision-making and poverty measurement and monitoring. They should also play an advocacy role to ensure that statistical production and use are given high priority by Governments and donor agencies. By building ample capacity to better assess user needs and to keep abreast of the changing data needs of policymakers, the private sector and civil society would also contribute to those efforts. Moreover, countries should be encouraged to build their capacity to harness technology and to improve the way data are collected, managed and disseminated to users. In addition, countries should build competent user groups to properly understand and interpret available statistical data, build competencies in survey management in national statistical offices, and promote coordination and synergy among institutions involved in statistical activities. These are some of the issues and challenges that should be addressed to meet the increasing demand for quality statistics.

III. Initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges facing African national statistical systems

5. To address the identified challenges, stakeholders in statistical development in Africa have undertaken several initiatives, mainly built on such strategies as advocacy, coordination of statistical capacity-building activities, training and enhancing capabilities, to undertake household surveys and censuses. The present report will put emphasis on some of the most recent initiatives.

A. Revamping of statistical functions within major regional organizations

6. Among the positive developments that took place at the dawn of the new millennium is the revamping of statistical functions in major regional organizations in response to the repeated demands of stakeholders to address the issue of the underdevelopment of statistical activity in Africa.

7. Following the repositioning exercise of ECA in 2006/07, the ECA Statistics Division was re-established as the African Centre for Statistics in August 2006. This results from the recognition that statistics is an important cross-cutting theme, vital to advancing the special needs of African countries, in particular in respect of NEPAD and the monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards reaching agreed development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. Other regional organizations also expanded their statistical activities. The restructuring of the African Development Bank culminated in the establishment of a statistics department with two divisions, one dealing with economic and social statistics, and the other with statistical capacity-building, making the organization one of the major providers of statistical technical assistance on the continent. In addition, the African

Union Commission has recently set up a new statistics unit within its Department for Economic Affairs and has launched the process for preparing an African charter for statistics.

B. Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics

8. The Marrakech roundtable held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2004, endorsed a time-bound and costed action plan, the Marrakech Action Plan,[1] for improving development statistics. The Action Plan has six key actions for improving statistics nationally and internationally, namely, mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems, especially through the implementation of a national strategy for the development of statistics; preparing for the 2010 global round of population censuses; increasing the finances for statistical capacity-building; setting up an international household survey network; undertaking urgent improvements for Millennium Development Goals monitoring; and increasing the accountability of the international statistical system.

9. The Marrakech Action Plan will be implemented in Africa using the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa as the implementation strategy.

C. Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa

10. To overcome the shortcomings of past efforts aimed at enhancing statistical capacity in Africa, the major sponsors of the Forum on African Statistical Development, namely the African Development Bank, the Partnership for Statistics in the Twenty-first Century and the World Bank, agreed to launch the production of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa[2] under the leadership of ECA. The framework is expected to create synergies, avoid duplication of effort and lead to sustainable capacity for statistical development in Africa.

11. The Framework is broad in scope, rather than focusing on a specific set of activities and policy prescriptions, recognizing that most actions will need to be initiated at the national level and that countries face different problems and have different priorities. The Framework was endorsed by the heads of national statistical offices in Africa and the stakeholders of the Forum on African Statistical Development in February 2006 and by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in April 2007. The primary responsibility for implementing the framework lies with the national statistical systems, with the key supporters being national statistical offices, while implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Framework is to be jointly undertaken by the African Development Bank and ECA.

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[1] Available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc04/marrakech.pdf.

[2] AfDB, PARIS21, ECA and the World Bank, "The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa: better statistics for improved development outcomes", ECA Documents Publishing and Distribution Unit, Addis Ababa, October 2006.

D. National strategy for the development of statistics

12. The national strategy for the development of statistics is the overarching action point of the Marrakech Action Plan and the headline strategy of the Framework. The Marrakech Action Plan urged all poor developing countries to design their national strategy for the development of statistics by the end of 2006 and to start implementing them in 2007, with a view to producing better statistics for national and international use by the time of the next millennium review, in 2010. The national strategy for the development of statistics is seen as an approach that has a greater chance of improving national statistics. If properly designed and implemented following the national strategy for the development of statistics principles, which have been developed by PARIS21 and other partners, the statistics can fundamentally change the statistical landscape and enhance the fortunes of the statistical profession in countries. There is a drive to get all African countries to design and implement the national strategy for the development of statistics.

E. Africa Symposium on Statistical Development

13. The Africa Symposium on Statistical Development[3] is a country-led initiative aimed at providing a forum where African countries can discuss issues pertaining to their statistical development on a regionally coordinated basis. The Symposium is organized in African countries on a rotational basis. It considers a number of aspects relating to developing sustainable statistical systems, addresses the challenges of capacity-building and provides a platform for a comprehensive exchange of practical experiences and best practices among African countries.

14. The first symposium took place in Cape Town, South Africa; the second in Kigali; and the third, in Accra. The symposia, which have been organized by ECA, the Statistics Division and South Africa (Chair of the Friends of ECA), have concentrated on sharing information and experiences on the population and housing census.

F. International Comparison Programme for Africa

15. This continent-wide programme involving 52 African countries was launched in 2002 with the objective of strengthening the capacity of African countries to provide timely and reliable data in including purchasing power parity estimates that facilitate cross-country comparisons of price levels and economic aggregates in real terms. ICP-Africa, which is coordinated and led (both financially and technically) by the African Development Bank, has also assisted several African countries in designing their national strategy for the development of statistics and regional statistical training centres in improving their services to countries.

G. Statistical Commission for Africa

16. Following the re-establishment of the Statistics Division at ECA, a new subsidiary body specifically devoted to statistics and statistical development on the

[3] For more details, see the Symposium website at http://www.statssa.gov.za/asc/index.asp.

continent was created. The last Conference of Ministers, held in Addis Ababa in April 2007, endorsed the creation of the subsidiary body in charge of statistics, the Statistical Commission for Africa, as the apex entity in statistical development on the continent.

H. African charter for statistics

17. The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa urges the African Union Commission to play a greater role in the statistical development of the region, in particular in the area of high-level advocacy for statistics. The African Union Commission has initiated the design, with the collaboration of regional partners, of an African charter for statistics, which will be tabled to the forthcoming African Union Conference of African Ministers of Finance and the Heads of States Summit in January 2008 for endorsement.

I. African Statistical Coordination Committee

18. Following the meeting of the representatives of the African Development Bank, the ECA, the African Union Commission, and the African Capacity-building Foundation, held in Tunis in September 2007 to discuss the coordination of statistical capacity-building work in Africa, it was decided that an African Statistical Coordination Committee be established to lead the coordination of statistical activities in Africa.

J. Other initiatives

19. It is worth mentioning the yearly celebrations throughout Africa of the African Statistics Day on 18 November, to raise awareness in society about the role and importance of statistics in the economic and social development of Africa. The theme for the 2005 celebrations was the 2010 round of population and housing censuses; for 2006, it was the national strategy for the development of statistics as a new benchmark in statistical planning; and for 2007, the theme was the measurement of employment and related indicators.

20. The publication of the *African Statistical Journal* is one of the major initiatives aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and best practices among stakeholders in the African statistical system. The African Development Bank is funding the publication and distribution of the journal. In addition, ECA has initiated the production of a quarterly African statistical newsletter, whose first issue was launched at the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development on 3 December 2007.

IV. African Centre for Statistics: response to the challenges

21. The creation of the African Centre for Statistics[4] is expected to enable the ECA to play its rightful role in statistical development by enhancing the statistical capacities of African countries for better economic management and tracking of progress towards the achievement of gender equality and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

22. To achieve this, the African Centre for Statistics has developed a programme aimed at revitalizing and better coordinating statistics at the ECA secretariat, enhancing its statistical coordination function and helping to strengthen the capacities of statistical systems in Africa. It takes into account the core functions of ECA and the work programmes of various stakeholders in statistical development in Africa, in particular the African Development Bank, the African Capacity-building Foundation and the African Union Commission, ensuring that duplication is avoided and synergy is built among the actors. It also considers the various challenges facing Africa in statistical development and is built on a set of strategies aimed at overcoming them.

23. The programme has six components, namely, the African Population and Housing Census Programme, aimed at preparing African countries to fully participate in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses; re-engineering household surveys in Africa aimed at upgrading the capabilities of countries to meet the increased demand in statistics emerging from national, subregional, regional and international development agendas; economic statistics to support countries in their quest to comply with international standards and norms; statistical training to help countries address the issue of human resources; coordination of statistical development activities aimed at addressing the issue of uncoordinated statistical development efforts; and statistical data management to provide stakeholders with quality statistics on African countries.

24. In addition, the African Centre for Statistics will be acting as the secretariat to the following bodies: the Statistical Commission for Africa, the African Statistical Coordination Committee and the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa coordination committee.

V. Actions to be taken by the Statistical Commission

25. The present report has set out some of the major challenges facing the African continent in terms of statistical development as well as some of the initiatives aimed at addressing them. The Commission may wish to express its views on the following initiatives in order to improve the capacity of African countries to respond to the increased demand for quality statistics emanating from their development agendas:

(a) Recognition of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa as the framework through which all development efforts geared towards statistical development in the African region have to be channelled;

[4] Details on ACS can be found in the document: "*Strategic and business plan for the development of statistics: better statistics for better policies and development outcomes*", ECA, September 2006.

(b) Calling upon African countries and development partners to give a higher priority to statistics in their development programmes and to support mainstreaming of statistics in country development processes including the poverty reduction strategies;

(c) Calling upon all African countries to design effective national strategies for the development of statistics and for development partners to assist in both the design and implementation of the statistics;

(d) Calling upon development partners to support African countries in fully participating in the 2010 round of popu!ation and housing censuses;

(e) Calling upon development partners to support African countries through coordination mechanisms put in place by African stakeholders, including the Statistical Commission for Africa, the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity-building in Africa coordination committee and the African Statistical Coordination Committee;

(f) Providing support to the overall programme of work of ECA in statistics and its coordination role in various bodies, including the Statistical Commission for Africa, the African Statistical Coordination Committee and others.

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Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics. The report, which is presented to the Commission for information, describes and identifies projects in the area of health statistics, which are of interest to national statistical offices. It also includes work under development by the Health Metric Network on health surveys. The detailed report of the meeting of the Working Group will be circulated at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission as a background document. The Commission may wish to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

07-63187 (E) 271207

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics

1. At its meeting in November 2006, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics tasked a small group with developing a workplan for the Group. Consultations between the chair of the Intersecretariat Working Group and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Statistical Commission and the Health Metrics Network identified areas that could be presented to country representatives of the national statistical offices for their evaluation. A meeting to discuss these issues has been scheduled for 17 and 18 December 2007. Up to 10 country representatives are scheduled to attend. Of particular interest are the progress that has been made in advocating for civil registration systems and other forms of vital registration and a recent meeting hosted by the WHO/Health Metrics Network in July 2007 on health surveys.

2. The agenda of the December 2007 meeting will focus on the interest and role of national statistical offices in the further development of the following two areas:

(a) Collaboration to improve vital registration: the Health Metrics Network, in close collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, WHO and a number of other partners published a series of four papers in *The Lancet*, a leading medical journal, entitled "Who counts?" on vital registration. The papers describe the current situation in countries and outline ways to improve civil registration. The Intersecretariat Working Group intends to further discuss these issues and explore ways in which health and statistics can work together to improve vital registration in countries;

(b) Collaboration in conducting health surveys: the interest and role of national statistical offices and the Intersecretariat Working Group in health surveys and the evaluation of interactions between national statistical offices and international organizations (including funders) and ministries of health in the area of health surveys.

3. Specific topics include:

(a) National statistical office interest in endorsing the concept of a standard survey composed of modules that can be added or deleted based on need;

(b) Potential modalities for health surveys and past experience with the modalities;

(c) Interest in institutionalizing regular health surveys and/or including health survey components in economic surveys;

(d) Interest in disease- or problem-specific modules versus general health status modules;

(e) National statistical office involvement in civil registration, vital rates and cause-of-death statistics challenges;

(f) Current capacity for analysing health survey data;

(g) Issues related to institutional capacity and institutional relationships.

4. The potential role of the Intersecretariat Working Group in each of the above topics will be discussed. The discussions will serve to develop a workplan and an

operational structure for the Group. The report of the meeting will be available as a conference room paper.

5. The Commission may wish to take note of the report by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics.

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Items for information: population and housing censuses

Population and housing censuses

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the Statistical Commission in accordance with a request of the Commission at its thirty-eighth session.[a] It presents activities completed in respect of the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses in general, including the conduct of expert group meetings and training workshops; finalization of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 2*; and the development of a website to serve as a census knowledge base. It also contains future activities related to the 2010 World Programme. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

[a] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

07-63205 (E) 311207

I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-eighth session,[1] the Statistical Commission urged the United Nations Statistics Division and other international agencies to increase their technical assistance to national statistical offices in order to strengthen national capacity for the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. In addition, the Commission requested the expeditious release of the revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.

II. Activities of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses

2. Following the approval by the Statistical Commission of the second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, the Division undertook activities that were aimed at advancing the implementation of the 2010 World Programme, including finalizing the revision; conducting three expert group meetings and five training workshops; and developing a website to serve as a census knowledge base.

A. Second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*

3. The second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations* was approved by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session, in February 2007. The document has been finalized and submitted for publication and translation. The online version is available on the Division website at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/census3.htm.

B. Expert group meetings

4. The following three expert group meetings were held in response to requests from countries for guidance in planning and conducting their 2010 round of censuses:

(a) The first expert group meeting was held in New York from 29 May to 1 June 2007. The meeting was on contemporary practices in census mapping and the use of geographic information systems. The expert group reviewed the conceptual framework and different approaches to census mapping and the capabilities offered by geospatial technologies to support census mapping; reviewed geocoding concepts and approaches with respect to data collection; assessed the use of global positioning systems and other geospatial technologies for digital delineation of enumeration areas and data collection; reviewed the development of geographic databases, spatial analysis and data dissemination; and identified and discussed organizational and institutional issues associated with census cartography. In

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

addition, the group provided suggestions with respect to the revision and update of the *Handbook on Geographic Information Systems and Digital Mapping*;[2]

(b) The second expert group meeting was held in New York from 24 to 28 September 2007 to review a draft handbook on measuring international migration in censuses and surveys. The group made recommendations on the practical application of international guidelines related to measuring international migration. The recommendations are being taken into account in finalizing the handbook, which is expected to be released during the second quarter of 2008;

(c) The third expert group meeting, which was held in New York from 5 to 9 November 2007, was conducted by the Division in collaboration with the Bureau of Statistics of the International Labour Organization. The group reviewed a draft handbook on measuring economically active population in censuses. The suggestions and recommendations of the expert group have been taken into account in finalizing the handbook, which is expected to be released during the first quarter of 2008.

C. Training workshops

5. Five workshops were conducted in 2007 by the Division, in collaboration with the relevant regional commissions and subregional organizations. The four workshops on census management and cartography were held in:

(a) Lusaka, from 8 to 12 October 2007, for the anglophone African countries;

(b) Rabat, from 12 to 16 November 2007, for the francophone African countries;

(c) Bangkok, from 15 to 19 October 2007, for the Asian countries;

(d) Port-of-Spain, from 22 to 26 October 2007, for the Caribbean countries.

6. The purpose of the four workshops was to emphasize the importance of good census management and to highlight the evolving capabilities of geographic information systems and other geospatial technologies that could be used in censuses. The workshops covered such census activities as delineation of enumeration areas; data collection; and analysis and dissemination of census information.

7. Other topics covered by the workshops included international guidelines for census-taking to enhance quality; use of contemporary technologies for census geography; and the role of censuses in disaster management.

8. The fifth workshop, held from 3 to 6 December 2007 in Cairo for countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, focused on the complementary use of census results and vital statistics in producing population estimates. In addition, it introduced or reiterated to the participants the international standards for civil registration and vital statistics, as a necessary continuation of the foundation laid by population and housing censuses.

[2] *Studies in Methods, No. 79* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.12).

D. 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme website

9. The Division has developed a website as part of its activities for the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/default.htm. The primary objective of the website is to promote international exchange and sharing of census-related knowledge and information and to monitor progress being made in the implementation of the Programme at the national, regional and international levels. The website provides updated information on country activities related to census-taking in the 2010 census round, including national census dates and questionnaires that have been used in various censuses. In addition, the website provides information on census meetings and workshops organized by the Division and other organizations of the United Nations system.

10. One of the important aspects of the website is the census knowledge base it provides, which serves as a repository of census methodology and documents pertaining to country best practices in census-taking. The main objective of the knowledge base is therefore to act as a resource centre for use by countries as they conduct their population and housing censuses. To date, the knowledge base contains over 200 articles on activities related to census-taking. The Division will soon add an online technical publication on guidelines for documenting census operations and activities.

11. In addition to working with the regional commissions, the Division continued to work closely with such international agencies as the World Bank and the United Nations Population Fund. For example, as a follow-up to the Marrakech Plan for Statistics, the World Bank provided financial support for the implementation of the 2010 World Programme. Collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund focused on advocacy activities, including having resource persons participate in workshops on advocacy.

III. Future activities

12. A range of census-related activities are envisaged in 2008, including those listed below:

Monitoring country activities related to censuses

13. In 2008, as part of the activities related to the 2010 World Programme, the Division will continue to monitor the progress of countries in conducting their population and housing censuses. The major goal of the 2010 World Programme is to ensure that all countries and areas conduct a population and housing census at least once in the decade 2005-2014. Consequently, the primary function of monitoring national census activities is to set up an alert system to identify the status of census-taking in various countries. Identifying the difficulties that countries may face in implementing the 2010 World Programme will help to ensure proper and timely support during the different phases of census preparation and conduct. The findings will be brought to the attention of the international community in an attempt to generate support and attract donors.

Technical guidelines and handbooks

14. The Division will continue to develop guidelines and technical materials pertaining to the different census phases. Work will continue in the preparation of reference and training materials on topics critical to the 2010 World Programme. The strategy is to focus each year on successive stages of the census process, thereby enabling the Division to update and/or develop guidelines and best practices in a rational way. Materials used in workshops will be refined and adapted to online training materials for use by a wider audience. In this connection, beginning in 2008, material on census management, mapping and geographic information systems will be posted online.

Training workshops

15. In 2008, the Division will focus on training workshops covering data collection, quality assurance, data capture and editing. The workshops will also cover the use of handheld devices in data collection, optical data capture and editing. In addition, the workshops will cover modules of such special topics as engendering censuses and measuring disability through censuses.

Documenting alternative methodologies and preconditions for their adoption and portability

16. Traditional/conventional censuses are still the most popular methodologies for many countries; however, some countries are adopting or planning new approaches in census-taking, including the rolling census, the virtual census, the register-based census and the re-engineered census. The Division will monitor these new developments and methodologies for elaboration and dissemination on the Division's website. Emphasis will be placed on discussing the preconditions necessary for such methodologies to yield reliable data and the prospects for portability to other countries.

Maintenance of the resource centre on the Internet

17. The information on activities posted on the website will be continuously updated in 2008 and additional documents will be added to the knowledge base. It is hoped that there will be active participation of member countries in using the available documents to provide information for inclusion on the website.

Technical assistance

18. Technical assistance missions will be undertaken to provide country-specific support. The aim of the missions will be to strengthen the capacity of countries in implementing censuses.

Development of a software package for census information dissemination

19. Work on the development of a software package, CensusInfo, will be initiated in 2008 in collaboration with DevInfo to assist countries in disseminating census results on the website and CD-ROM. Based on the DevInfo platform, unique functionalities will be added to meet the census dissemination requirements, such as cross tabulations, template reports for dissemination and mapping geographic information systems facilities.

20. Recognizing that international, regional, subregional and national organizations and other entities are stakeholders in the 2010 World Programme, the Division will continue to enhance the communication networks needed to support the Programme. In the meantime, the Division has developed a mechanism to monitor the ability of countries to provide funding for their censuses and such information will be made available to prospective donors.

21. The World Bank's support for the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses has been instrumental to achieving the goals related to the above-mentioned activities in 2007. The importance of ensuring that this support is continued throughout the duration of the 2010 round of censuses cannot be overemphasized, especially when taking into consideration the host of continuing activities related to the Programme.

22. The Commission may wish to take note of the present report.

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Items for information: Round Table on Business Survey Frames

Round Table on Business Survey Frames

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.
** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames

1. The Round Table on Business Survey Frames is an international expert group under the umbrella of the Statistical Commission engaged in further development of business registers, survey frames and associated topics. Its final report to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session (E/CN.3/2006/23) contained information on the purpose and future direction of work of the Round Table. The present report focuses on the Round Table's most recent meeting and its outcome. Documents of this expert group are posted on the website http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/businessurvey/info/data/links.htm.

2. From 21 to 26 October 2007, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (DESTATIS) hosted the twentieth International Round Table on Business Survey Frames. The participants of the Round Table reached an agreement on changing the name of the forum to "Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers", in accordance with the practice of similar expert groups. The name of this expert group is also the name of one of the city groups on statistical methodologies. The title of the recent conference places emphasis on the long history of the group. Around 70 experts from 40 countries and international organizations exchanged their experiences in the methodological developments of business registers and discussed the possibilities of register-based business statistics.

3. On the first day, following tradition, the participating countries presented their progress reports. Each country described its problems and highlighted its key activities. Even new participants showcased their recent developments. The session was chaired by Peter Schmidt (DESTATIS, Germany).

4. The following sessions focused on different topics. Session 2, led by Michel Euriat (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, France), focused on the introduction of new business register tools or systems. Session 3 dealt with the classification system within business registers, chaired by Norbert Rainer (Statistics Austria).

5. Session 4 had a forward-looking perspective on the role of business registers in future statistical systems led by Andreas Lindner (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development — OECD). Session 5 was split into two parallel sessions: the first, on benchmarking tools for business registers, led by Søren Andersen (Statistics Denmark) and business profiling, headed by Harrie van der Ven (Statistical Office of the European Communities — Eurostat); and the second, on entrepreneurship indicators, business demography, small and medium enterprise statistics, chaired by Rick Clayton (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics). Session 6 dealt with multinational groups, chaired by John Perry (Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

6. In the concluding session chaired by Peter Schmidt (DESTATIS, Germany) the future of the group was discussed. The conference agreed on changing the name of the expert group to "Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers". Beginning in 2008, the meetings will be held biannually, alternating with the joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, OECD and Eurostat (next joint meeting in 2009). OECD offered to host the meeting in 2008 and several potential hosts have shown their interest in holding the meeting in 2010.

7. Following the conference, a special workshop for developing countries, led by Gerhard Stock (DESTATIS, Germany), was offered. The workshop brought together 18 developing as well as developed countries to discuss the prospects of supporting other countries in their developments in the field of business registers and register-based business statistics. In the future, a session within the official agenda of the conference will deal with the needs of the countries starting up business registers and register-based business statistics.

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Items for information: international merchandise trade statistics

Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics. The present report, prepared by the World Trade Organization as convener of the Task Force is submitted to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the work done by the Task Force, in particular its updated terms of reference and future work programme.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

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I. Follow-up to actions by the Statistical Commission

A. *Manual on Export and Import Price Indices*

1. The Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, in its report to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-fourth session (E/CN.3/2003/14), stated that there was a need for a manual on international trade indices to be developed through an inter-agency effort. The Commission endorsed this plan and welcomed the intention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to develop it.

2. IMF is coordinating the work on the *Manual on Export and Import Price Indices* with a view to fostering coherence in structure and style with the consumer and producer price index manuals developed by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics and to adopting, wherever appropriate, consistent content, terminology and methodology. A technical expert group was set up by the working group, and drafts of the *Manual* were circulated through a dedicated website. The expert group reviewed the draft in September 2006.

3. The Task Force's concerns centred mostly on the feasibility of compiling detailed price indices from surveys, their cost-effectiveness and the appropriateness of using unit values as complements to or substitutions for price indices. Accordingly, the *Manual*'s focus on price indices was modified to include an additional chapter on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of unit values. The finalization of the *Manual* is envisaged for 2008/2009.

B. Fourth revision of the Standard International Trade Classification

4. At its thirty-fifth session, the Statistical Commission approved the Task Force's recommendation to prepare a fourth revision of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, Rev.4). The United Nations Statistics Division prepared an initial draft of the classification and coordinated the preparation of its provisional draft. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission took note of the final draft of SITC, Rev.4, and the Statistics Division submitted it for publication.

5. SITC, Rev.4, is now available in print (English version)[1] and online on the website of the Statistics Division. Versions of the classification in the other official languages of the United Nations are being prepared. The Statistics Division website also contains the respective correlation tables between SITC, Rev.4, and SITC, Rev.3, and amended editions of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS07 and HS02). A correspondence between SITC, Rev.4, and the Classification by Broad Economic Categories is currently under development.

[1] *Statistical Papers, No. 34/Rev.4* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XVII.10).

II. Activities since the thirty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission

A. Methodology

6. *International Merchandise Trade Statistics.* The Supplement to the *Compilers Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics* is included in the United Nations Statistics Division publication programme for the biennium 2006-2007. It is intended to further clarify issues of common concern through the provision of additional information and compilation guidance relevant to those statistics. The draft Supplement contains six chapters covering a wide range of issues, including an overview of national compilation and dissemination practices and their compliance with the *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, Revision 2* (IMTS, Rev.2).[2] This part of the Supplement summarizes country responses to the questionnaire which was drafted by the Statistics Division, reviewed by other members of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and sent out jointly by the Statistics Division, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization. Other chapters of the Supplement either provide updated information on various topics relevant to trade data compilation or focus on specific new challenges affecting merchandise trade statistics. In particular, the following issues are covered: the revised Kyoto Convention, HS07 and SITC, Rev.4, selected conceptual and data compilation issues (for example, use of change of ownership criterion, goods for processing, imports FOB), data collection via Intrastat, and the relationship between IMTS, Rev.2, and the fifth and sixth revisions of the *Balance of Payments Manual.* Many Task Force members provided their inputs to the provisional draft. At the time of the writing of the present report, the Statistics Division is preparing the final text of the Supplement

7. *Revision of the International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Concepts and Definitions.* The Task Force supported the initiative of the Statistics Division to begin the third revision of IMTS, aiming at submission of the updated recommendations to the Statistical Commission for adoption in March 2010. The third revision of the recommendations became necessary, inter alia, in view of:

(a) Changes in the way international merchandise trade is conducted, for example, increasing globalization of the production and distribution processes, expansion of intra-firm trade, transactions with bundled goods and services components;

(b) Changes in the legal environment, such as adoption by the World Customs Organization Council of the Revised Kyoto Convention and new legal/administrative measures for increased security or further simplification of customs formalities;

(c) Changes in related statistical frameworks, such as the *System of National Accounts, 1993*[3] and the *Balance of Payments Manual*;

(d) Changes in user needs, including increased demand for more detailed and timely data for market access negotiations and trade policy purposes, market

[2] *Studies in Methods, No. 52, Rev.2* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.16).

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4.

research by the business community and economic analysis (for example, linking industry and trade data);

(e) The need for further clarification of some existing concepts and improvement of overall readability.

The modalities and organization of the revision process are described in a separate report of the Statistics Division to the Commission.

8. *Geo-nomenclatures*. Drawing on experiences in merchandise trade statistics, the Task Force provided the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities with initial material on the issue of enhancing transparency and harmonization of geo-nomenclatures between international organizations. The Committee agreed to focus the work in this area on country coding by asking the Statistics Division to collect concerns and questions related to aggregations or disaggregations of countries and territories not currently covered in the *Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistics Use*.[4] Transparency of discrepancies in regional classifications should, however, be guaranteed by the respective inter-agency and expert groups, such as those on the Millennium Development Goals Indicators.

B. Databases on international trade-international data production and dissemination

9. The objective of the Task Force is centred on the improvement of the efficiency, quality and consistency of international data production and dissemination, while reducing the response burden of national authorities and avoiding duplication of work in international organizations. Through well-functioning cooperation among multilateral organizations, considerable results have been achieved with respect to a joint data collection, processing and dissemination.

10. *Cooperation between the Statistics Division and OECD*. The United Nations Comtrade database underwent significant improvements regarding coordination mechanisms and data quality. In particular:

(a) The joint data-collection and processing system of the Statistics Division and OECD has been implemented since 1 January 2006. As of now, all data sets beginning 2000 are completely harmonized;

(b) The regional commissions of the United Nations and other international organizations have been continuing their cooperation with the Statistics Division in collecting annual trade data files. In particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) entered into a formal agreement with the Statistics Division on exchanging trade data;

(c) Further progress has been made in aligning Comtrade data with annual figures from the United Nations *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the Common Data Set;

[4] *Statistical Papers, No. 49, Rev.4* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.9); also available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49.htm.

(d) The Statistics Division established a new Comtrade portal which establishes an entry point to all United Nations Comtrade-related information and services, including a knowledge base and an expert and community forum.

11. *Common Data Set*. The Common Data Set, an analytical data set to improve coverage and consistency, reconciles the annual values of the countries' total trade available in the respective databases of participating organizations (Eurostat, OECD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Statistics Division, the World Trade Organization). It is now available on the Task Force's website as an interactive database, distinguishing official data from the best values according to international concepts and definitions and including adjustment and estimate descriptions in its metadata. The enhancement of data quality of this analytical data set is achieved through a specialization and sharing of work among international organizations. The Common Data Set is updated annually and positive feedback by users has been received.

12. Future activities will focus on bringing the Common Data Set to the attention of users, seeking feedback from national statistical authorities, and exploring the feasibility of using Statistical Data and Metadata Exchanges for its maintenance.

13. *Data dissemination tools and formats*. Significant progress has been achieved by the organizations in data dissemination, particularly in the presentation of merchandise trade data in combination with other analytically useful statistical indicators. Noteworthy developments among Task Force members were:

(a) The online release of the OECD International Trade Indicators database;

(b) The release of the tariff profiles, produced jointly with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and UNCTAD, complemented by the dissemination by the World Trade Organization of predefined national tables at a 6-digit HS level;

(c) The release of the CEPALSTAT online database of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which combines social, economic and environmental indicators;

(d) The revamp of the FAOSTAT online application, with, inter alia, new nomenclatures in order to facilitate comparison of trade with related data of other domains;

(e) Plans of ITC to provide developing economies with free access to its TradeMap application;

(f) The free availability of all Eurostat's application, which are NewCronos, EasyComext and Analytical Comext, as well as data dissemination through DVDs and File Transfer Protocol.

14. *Trade and the Millennium Development Goals*. Three Task Force members (the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization) have been joining their resources to devise and maintain two indicators on market access (38 and 39), used for the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. These indicators correspond to the share of imports into developed countries from developing countries and least developed countries entering free of duty, and average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products, textiles and clothing from developing countries. A dedicated website for the respective

indicators on market access has been designed and is maintained by the three organizations.

C. Public website of the Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

15. The Task Force launched a public website of its own which is aimed at disseminating comprehensive reference materials on merchandise trade statistics. It hosts the CDS database and provides a portal to international organizations' trade statistics, concepts and definitions, information on compilation and reporting practices, capacity-building activities (listing activities by year, organization and country) and updates on the Task Force's activities.

III. New issues and related activities

16. Trade is a rapidly evolving subject matter. The intensifying globalization of the world economy, changing commercial and administrative practices associated with the international flow of goods as well as revisions of major statistical frameworks have repercussions on merchandise trade statistics.

17. The Task Force has been continuously identifying issues to be analysed, or opportunities for improving concepts and definitions, rationalizing data production and enhancing data quality. Further, the Task Force has kept abreast of innovative activities carried out by its individual members, for example:

(a) Eurostat's new Intrastat and Extrastat legislation (to be implemented in 2009) stimulated discussions on the balance between the reporting burden and users' needs;

(b) OECD and Eurostat have initiated projects to link structural business and trade statistics. Such a linkage would make it possible to derive new statistical products, such as indicators that combine trade statistics with enterprise-related criteria (for example, by size and/or class), or the estimation of intra-firm trade;

(c) Ongoing projects in Eurostat that are considered important to analyse intra-firm trade and value chains (trade by tasks), or to link trade statistics up with other domains to analyse globalization in general, are the EuroGroups Register for registering multinational enterprises and a programme to modernize business and trade statistics in order to reduce response burdens and allow for the implementation of new technologies.

18. The Task Force is considering these developments in terms of general methodology and recommended data compilation practices. While the forthcoming *Supplement to the Compilers Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics* devotes substantial discussion to new developments, the Task Force is fully taking them into consideration in its current activities and planning of future work, such as the preparation of the revision of IMTS, Rev.2.

19. New developments in trade and business practices also make it obligatory to revise old standards or preconceptions when the new, economic phenomena are of a cross-cutting nature, such as the measurement of foreign affiliates' activities, or the statistical monitoring of intra-firm cross-border trade. The new needs to develop

disaggregated statistics at the business level imply a joint approach from the areas of trade in goods and trade in services.

20. In order to develop this forward-looking strategy, the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics approached the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services to explore closer cooperation. A first joint meeting is planned during 2008 to discuss cross-cutting issues and further cooperation which will be issue-driven with well-defined outputs and an effective modus operandi.

IV. Terms of reference of the Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

21. The Task Force reviewed its terms of reference and agreed on an updated version, as set out in annex I.

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

I. Members, convener and organization of work

1. The Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, was established in 1990 by the United Nations Statistics Division at the request of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities. The establishment of the Task Force was endorsed in 1993 by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session. The Task Force comprises all international entities or organizations actively involved in the collection, processing, dissemination and/or use of international merchandise trade statistics. They include the Statistics Division, the statistical divisions of the United Nations regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Customs Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, Eurostat and the International Trade Centre. Other international organizations may join the Task Force as observers with the consent of the current members.

2. The World Trade Organization is elected to serve as the Task Force's convener.

3. The Task Force will hold regular annual meetings. Additional meetings can be organized as necessary.

4. The website of the Task Force is maintained by the World Trade Organization as its convener, while its electronic discussion group website is jointly maintained by the World Trade Organization and OECD.

5. All procedural issues are to be decided by consensus of the regular members, or by the majority vote if requested by any member of the Task Force.

II. Mandate of the Task Force

6. The objective of the Task Force is to ensure coordination of activities carried out by participating agencies in the area of international merchandise trade statistics and related fields including:

(a) The coordination of data collection from countries and sharing of the collected data sets to reduce countries' response burden;

(b) The harmonization of data processing procedures and coordination of data dissemination through the agencies' databases and publications to foster the coherence of the international merchandise trade statistics and to better serve the user community;

(c) The coordination of the collection of information on country data compilation and dissemination practices, cooperation in assessment of country data quality and identification of good practices;

(d) The identification of new conceptual and data compilation issues, their systematic study and formulation of proposals for possible solutions; in this context, the Task Force provides input into the revision process of the recommendations of the Statistical Commission for international merchandise trade statistics;

(e) Promotion of synergy with respect to the work of other inter-agency task forces, working groups and committees, in particular with respect to the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services;

(f) Coordination of training and capacity-building initiatives, especially in developing countries, to ensure higher efficiency of such initiatives in terms of achieving a better harmonization of country data compilation and dissemination practices and accuracy of the compiled and disseminated country data sets.

III. Reporting to the Statistical Commission

7. The convener of the Task Force will prepare an annual report for presentation to the Statistical Commission. The report will describe progress made by the Task Force during the preceding year as well as its plan of the future actions in accordance with the current terms of reference.

Annex II

Summary of the activities of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (completed and ongoing) during the two-year period under review

Achievements

Activity	Completed
• Fourth revision of the Standard International Trade Classification	2006
• Task Force website (http://imts.wto.org)	2006
• The Common Data Set disseminated on the Task Force website (interactive database)	2006
• United Nations Comtrade: full harmonization of OECD and United Nations data sets	2007

Ongoing activities

Activity	Envisaged completion
Methodology	
• *Manual on Export and Import Price Indices*	2008/2009
• Supplement to the *Compilers Manual for International Merchandise Trade Statistics*	2007
• Draft third revision of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Concepts and Definitions*	2009

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Statistics of international trade in services

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services. The report is submitted to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the work done by the Task Force, in particular in revising the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*, its future work programme and the proposal for a joint meeting with the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

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I. Activities since the thirty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission

1. Since its report on the thirty-sixth session in 2005 (E/CN.3/2005/6), the priority of the Task Force has been to plan and manage the revision of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* and to contribute to the revision of related frameworks such as the *Balance of Payments Manual* of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Task Force's technical sub-group on movement of natural persons, convened by the Statistical Division of the Secretariat, has completed its work, producing recommended definitions of remittances in the balance of payments and developing basic concepts related to measuring mode 4 supply of services. The technical sub-group was disbanded in 2006.

II. Revision of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*

2. Although the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* was first published as recently as 2002, an updating became necessary with the revision of the System of National Accounts, the *Balance of Payments Manual*, the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC) and publication of or revisions to a number of other related statistical frameworks. The extent of the changes necessitated by and related to trade in services in these other frameworks led the Task Force to speak of a revision rather than an updating. The revision nonetheless was planned to be limited in scope but could incorporate some improvements to the *Manual*, so long as they were in line with the basic 2002 framework.

3. The process of the revision of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* began in mid-2006 with a worldwide consultation on issues for the revision.

4. A consultation document and questionnaire, agreed to in April 2006 by the international agencies in the Task Force, explained the reasons for the update, presented the timetable and posed specific questions on a range of identified issues for the revision.

5. The consultation document and questionnaire was sent to all national statistics offices by the Statistics Office, to all balance of payments correspondents by IMF, and by the World Trade Organization to all its national trade delegations. The document was also sent to a wide range of interested international organizations. The document was made available in five languages (Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish), and placed on the Statistics Division's website. Some 110 replies were received from 89 countries and 6 international organizations.

6. The Task Force summarized and reviewed the responses, which were used to inform discussion of detailed proposals for changes to the *Manual*. Draft chapters were then prepared. Proposals were presented and discussed at the expert meeting on trade-in-services statistics convened by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat on 19 September 2007, which was attended by more than 40 countries from all continents. At its September 2007

meeting the Task Force discussed the proposals and a set of draft chapters and annexes. This was followed by a period for further written comments.

III. Proposed structure of the revised *Manual*

7. The Task Force proposes the following general structure with some broad changes to the *Manual*, while proposals for a number of detailed changes are yet to be agreed upon.

Chapter I
Foundations of the *Manual*: general introduction and overview

Chapter II
Conceptual framework for the development of statistics on international trade in services

8. The detailed discussion on modes of supply will be removed, expanded and incorporated in to a new chapter V on modes of supply. Chapter II will include a description of the links to other related statistical frameworks.

Chapter III
Service transactions between residents and non-residents

9. This chapter discusses service transactions in the balance of payments and will incorporate changes from the sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual*. The goods and services account of the sixth edition will provide the high-level structure for the revised Extended Balance of Payments Services Classification (EBOPS). Notable new items are manufacturing services and repairs and maintenance on movable goods. Telecommunications is split from postal services and grouped with computer and information services. Financial services will include financial intermediation services indirectly measured, and the definition of insurance services is amended in line with the revised System of National Accounts. The content of the royalties and licence fees category is clarified and the category will be renamed, perhaps as fees for the use of intellectual property. Merchanting of goods is removed from services and will be included with trade in goods.

10. Most responses from the worldwide consultation advised against changing the level of detail of the Extended Balance of Payments Services Classification, which currently contains about 75 categories. A number of specific changes were suggested. It was proposed to eliminate a few little-used EBOPS items and any redundant memorandum items and to introduce a limited number of new EBOPS and memorandum items. In this vein a provisional list of proposed changes to EBOPS has been identified based on countries' suggestions and this will be further refined. It is proposed to improve the descriptions of services in the chapter. The proposed high-level structure of the revised EBOPS, based on the sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual*, is as follows:

1 Manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others

2 Repairs and maintenance on movable goods

3 Transport

4 Travel

5 Telecommunications, computer, and information services

6 Construction

7 Insurance and pension fund services

8 Financial services

9 Fees for the use of intellectual property (name not decided)

10 Other business services

10.1 Research and development services

10.2 Professional and management consulting services

10.3 Technical, trade-related and other business services

11 Personal, cultural, and recreational services

12 Government (not included elsewhere)

Chapter IV
Foreign affiliates statistics and the international supply of services

11. Since the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* was published in 2002, there have been a number of important developments related to foreign affiliates trade-in-services (FATS) statistics and an increasing policy interest in them. First, the OECD *Handbook on Economic Globalisation Indicators* was published in 2005, early drafts of which were the basis for chapter 4 of the original *Manual*. Second, the regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on the structure and activity of foreign affiliates was approved in June 2007. Eurostat also published a recommendations manual on the production of foreign affiliates statistics in 2007. Third, the draft of the fourth edition of the OECD Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment, due to be finalized by mid-2008, has a chapter on foreign direct investment and globalization with recommendations on statistics on the activity of multinational enterprises, which includes FATS statistics.

12. The Task Force has been concerned to ensure that the revised FATS chapter in the *Manual* should be consistent with these other texts and to this end has sought to influence the OECD definition. While each text has a slightly different focus and the *Manual* has a particular interest in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and supply of services through a foreign commercial presence, nonetheless the basic framework of statistics on the activities of multinational enterprises and their foreign affiliates should be the source of information for each text, with a maximum of international comparability. With this basic aim, OECD has produced a draft text, with considerable assistance from the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, which is aligned with the latest draft of chapter 8, on foreign direct investment and globalization, of the fourth edition of the OECD Benchmark Definition, which in turn was closely coherent with the OECD handbook and chapter 4 of the original *Manual*. Text specific to the trade-in-services interest is retained in the *Manual* chapter. A number of issues were identified for further discussion.

13. On the title of the chapter, the Task Force supported the proposed new title "Foreign affiliates statistics and the international supply of services". The Task Force considered that this would help to reduce confusion by making clear that foreign affiliates statistics were not a part of international trade in services but were relevant to describing the commercial presence mode of supply and related market access issues. The acronym FATS was to be kept, with an explanation of the link to statistics on the activity of multinational enterprises.

14. The issue of continuing to use "majority ownership" as the target criterion for FATS was discussed. The Eurostat foreign affiliates regulation used the concept of "control", where a controlled affiliate is majority owned. This was also the concept favoured by the OECD handbook. Control could be transmitted along the chain of ownership provided that at each step (i.e. for each intermediate affiliate) there existed majority ownership. This issue would be addressed in the revised chapter 4.

15. Majority ownership is defined as the majority ownership of ordinary shares or voting power, in line with the OECD handbook and the revised OECD Benchmark Definition.

16. The Task Force supported proposed additions to the text to emphasize the need for international aggregation without double counting of outward FATS. This could be achieved by identifying the subset of outward foreign affiliates for which the reporting country was the country of residence of the ultimate controlling institution.

17. The Task Force supported the inclusion of a new variable "purchases of goods and services", which would be in the list of recommended variables for inward FATS. Regarding the ISIC categories for foreign affiliates statistics (ICFA), this still needed further work.

18. The measure of employment was discussed regarding the merits of using number of persons employed or full-time equivalents. It was agreed that consistency with other related frameworks such as national accounts was necessary. There was a suggestion to include a gender breakdown of employment.

19. At its October 2007 meeting, the IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Committee identified a need for more education on the use of foreign affiliates statistics in the context of international trade in services analysis. It proposed a joint article to be prepared with OECD and Eurostat.

Chapter V
Measuring modes of supply

20. The World Trade Organization has developed a draft of the proposed new chapter V on modes of supply of services, including material on mode 4 and the measurement of supply of services by mode. The Task Force reviewed the draft and provided detailed comments.

21. A request was made for a general table providing an approximate allocation of EBOPS items and FATS by mode of supply.

Annexes

22. The proposed annexes to the *Manual* include:

I. EBOPS

II. Concordance between EBOPS 2009, the Central Product Classification version 2.0 and the GATS Service Sectoral Classification List (GNS/W/120)

III. Approximate concordance between EBOPS 2009 and ICFA (based on ISIC, revision 4)

IV. Extract from GATS

V. GNS/W/120

VI. The *Manual* and the Tourism Satellite Account

VII. Analytical annex

23. Following widespread support for an analytical annex in the consultation process, OECD has prepared an outline of an analytical annex that would provide countries with guidance and a set of tools to analyse and add value to basic statistics on trade in services and FATS. The Task Force has reviewed this draft annex and provided comments.

IV. Progress and next steps in the revision of the *Manual*

24. The progress to date can be summarized as follows:

(a) Spring 2006: preparation of issues paper on updating of the *Manual*;

(b) May to July 2006: worldwide consultation on issues relating to updating;

(c) August 2006 to January 2007: detailed review by the Task Force of comments from the worldwide consultation and initial drafting of chapters and annexes.

25. The Task Force agreed on the following next steps and timing in the revision process:

(a) The Task Force would provide comments on the draft chapters (II, IV and V), EBOPS and the analytical annex by the end of October 2007;

(b) OECD would redraft EBOPS in line with the draft sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual* by December 2007;

(c) Chapters II, III, IV and V together with the Tourism Satellite Account and analytical annexes would be redrafted by authors by the end of February 2008;

(d) ICFA proposals in ISIC, revision 4, would be developed by Eurostat by the end of February 2008;

(e) Following a March 2008 Task Force meeting to review the redrafted chapters of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services*, a three-month worldwide consultation on proposals for the *Manual* would start in May 2008;

(f) The Task Force would review comments and prepare the final draft towards the end of 2008;

(g) The Task Force and its agencies would take opportunities to present the *Manual* proposals and discuss them with expert groups/seminars throughout 2008;

(h) The final draft of the *Manual* including annexes would be submitted to the Statistical Commission in December 2008;

(i) The *Manual* would be published in 2009.

V. Contribution to revisions of other frameworks

26. Since its last report, the Inter-agency Task Force has provided extensive input and advice to the IMF Balance of Payments Committee on measurement of trade in services. It has also monitored relevant developments in revisions of the System of National Accounts and the Central Product Classification and provided advice where appropriate.

27. In the other direction the Task Force has received considerable input from the World Tourism Organization on tourism statistics and the revised *Manual* will be much more compatible with the revised *Tourism Satellite Account Recommended Methodological Framework*.

VI. Technical cooperation and expert meetings

28. A number of expert meetings and training workshops on trade-in-services statistics have been held in the recent past:

(a) World Trade Organization, trade-in-services workshop in Taipei, Taiwan Province of China, May 2006;

(b) Association of Southeast Asian Nations, trade-in-services statistics workshop in Kuala Lumpur, 4-8 September 2006;

(c) OECD-Eurostat, expert meeting on trade-in-services statistics in Paris, 13 and 14 September 2006;

(d) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, trade-in-services workshop in Cairo, 6-9 February 2007;

(e) World Trade Organization, trade-in-services workshop in Pakistan in March 2007;

(f) IMF, seminar on trade-in-services for African countries in Tunis, 23-27 April 2007;

(g) OECD-Eurostat, expert meeting on trade-in-services statistics in Paris, 19 September 2007.

29. The next OECD-Eurostat expert meeting on trade-in-services statistics is tentatively set to be held on 17 September 2008 in Paris.

VII. Dealing with cross-cutting issues between trade in goods and trade in services

30. The World Trade Organization, in cooperation with OECD and the Statistics Division, prepared a discussion document on the work of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics. The discussion document in particular set out a proposal for a joint meeting with the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services in 2008. There are a number of trade-related measurement issues which either cross-cut trade in goods and trade in services or do not fall clearly in the competence of either task force. The boundary between goods and services is increasingly blurred and while it has a particular interest for trade negotiations it is less important for many other analytical purposes, where it may make more sense to look at trade in goods and services together. It should be noted that the terms of reference of the Inter-agency Task Force focus heavily on the information needs of trade negotiations (see annex to the present report).

31. It was felt in the Inter-agency Task Force that both trade task forces worked well, but that it would be useful to have a joint meeting or meetings to discuss particular common issues, which should lead to new outputs. A proliferation of meetings should be avoided.

32. The Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services agreed on the following statement:

> The Task Force affirmed its priority to revise the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* according to the timetable set. The Task Force decided that a March 2008 meeting of two to three days was necessary and practical to keep to the revision timetable.
>
> The Task Force agreed in principle to the proposal for a joint meeting, which would be a forum to discuss specific cross-cutting issues. There was a strong view that the joint meeting (or meetings — if it were decided that there should be more than one) should be issue-driven and that the question of what should be the output of the joint meeting(s) was important. There was not felt to be a need for a new organizational structure. On the issue of goods for processing/manufacturing services, the Task Force agreed that work to develop compilation guidance was important.

33. It has subsequently been agreed that the two task forces will meet in parallel at the headquarters of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Vienna on 26 and 27 March 2008 and hold a joint meeting on 28 March. It is planned that compilation guidance regarding goods for processing/manufacturing services will be on the agenda of the joint meeting and there will be a need to liaise with the national accounts group also looking at this subject.

VIII. Communications

34. The Statistics Division maintains a website for the Task Force where documentation and papers including accounts of meetings are posted. An electronic discussion group has been created to work on drafts of the *Manual*. The Task Force plans to issue a newsletter starting at the end of 2007.

35. The Task Force can be contacted at Std.servstat@oecd.org.

IX. Remittances and the technical sub-group on movement of natural persons

36. Although the results have already been reported to the Commission, for completeness it should be reported that the task force established, on the initiative of the Statistics Division in 2004, a technical sub-group on movement of natural persons. Originally set up to develop a conceptual framework for measuring mode 4 trade in services, it was requested to assume the task of clarifying definitions and concepts associated with remittances. Its recommendations on remittances, with minor amendments, have now been incorporated into the draft sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual*. The technical sub-group also progressed the framework for measuring mode 4 trade in services, and the results have been an important input to the new chapter 5 of the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services* on modes of supply. The technical sub-group was disbanded in 2006.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

The Inter-agency Task Force on Statistical of International Trade in Services, mandated by the Statistical Commission, was originally called the Inter-agency Task Force on Services Statistics. It was created in 1994 following a request from the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to the Statistical Commission to address the need for data on services to inform negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The original mandate covered all of services statistics. The terms of reference were formally narrowed to international trade in services in 1997, so as not to duplicate the work of others such as the Voorburg Group. The name of the Task Force was similarly changed in 1997.

Current terms of reference as agreed to at the sixth meeting of the Task Force in 1997

1. The work of the Task Force focuses on the following objectives:

(a) Strengthening cooperation between international organizations in the area of international trade-in-services statistics by liaising with other agencies or groups involved with international trade in services statistics;

(b) Promoting the development of international standards, systems and classifications for international trade-in-services statistics;

(c) Improving the availability, quality and comparability of international trade-in-services statistics;

(d) Facilitating the provision of technical assistance to developing countries in the compilation of trade-in-services statistics.

2. The work of the Task Force will focus on the statistical requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Trade in services is defined in article I, paragraph 2, of GATS.

3. The Task Force will serve as a forum of communication on requirements and resources and will endeavour to rationalize efforts expended towards the achievement of its goals.

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Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-eighth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I. A.

07-63193 (E) 311207

Report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

I. Purpose and organization of the Ottawa Group

1. The International Working Group on Price Indexes, known as the "Ottawa Group", was formed in 1994 to provide a forum for specialists to share their experiences and discuss research on crucial problems of measuring price change. Without avoiding theoretical issues, the Group focuses primarily on applied research, particularly, though not exclusively, in the area of consumer price indices. The Group examines advantages and disadvantages of various concepts, methods and procedures in the context of realistic operational environments, supported by concrete examples whenever possible. Participants are specialists and practitioners who work for or advise statistical agencies in different countries or international organizations. The Group initially met annually but now meets every 18 to 24 months.

2. The Group has a steering committee, which ensures both the continuity and evolution of its activities. The steering committee comprises representatives of the agencies that host the Group's recent or upcoming meetings, together with others agreed to by the membership from time to time. The representative of the Australian Bureau of Statistics currently serves as Executive Secretary.

3. Meetings of the Group are divided into sessions, each devoted to one clearly defined topic, with a designated moderator who is also responsible for producing a summary of the discussions and noting any recommendations.

4. The host agency provides facilities for the meeting and arranges for the compilation of proceedings, which contain the papers presented and the most important elements of discussions. They also include the Group's recommendations when a consensus clearly emerges from discussion or, if this is not the case, a summary of the varying opinions with a balanced commentary.

5. Copies of proceedings and information about the Ottawa Group are available on the Group's public website (www.ottawagroup.org). The agency providing secretariat services (currently the Australian Bureau of Statistics) is responsible for maintaining the website. The steering committee may also decide to edit and periodically release compendiums on selected topics whenever it is warranted by the status of available materials.

6. Researchers working for or advising national statistical offices have attended Group meetings, including from Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. There are also participants from international organizations such as Eurostat, the Statistics Department of the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

II. Meetings

7. The Group has met on 10 occasions:

- Ottawa, 31 October-3 November 1994
- Stockholm, 15-17 November 1995
- Voorburg, the Netherlands, 16-18 April 1997
- Washington, D.C., 22-24 April 1998
- Reykjavik, 25-27 August 1999
- Canberra, 16-21 April 2001
- Paris, 27-29 May 2003
- Helsinki, 23-25 August 2004
- London, 14-16 May 2006
- Ottawa, 10-12 October 2007

8. The next meeting of the Group is scheduled to be held in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 2009.

III. Recent activities

9. Since it last reported to the Statistical Commission, in 2005 (see E/CN.3/2005/8), the Group has met twice — May 2006 in London and October 2007 in Ottawa.

10. Fundamental problems of price measurement, particularly at the micro level, have been recurring themes of recent meetings. These problems include the use of different techniques and procedures for dealing with product quality change (especially hedonic methods); coping with increasingly complex pricing schemes (for example, discounts associated with bundling of telephone, Internet access and cable television services); and the impacts of new technologies. Sessions have been devoted to especially difficult areas for price index construction, such as financial and insurance services, health-care services, telecommunications services and housing. In the last two meetings, the Group has also considered other issues such as quality assurance in the production of price indexes and using price databases from electronic commerce sources to improve data quality and to reduce the costs of price index compilation.

11. At the Helsinki meeting in 2004, the Group acknowledged the significant achievement of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics in producing new international manuals on consumer and producer price indexes. The view of the Intersecretariat Working Group that these manuals (particularly the electronic versions) should be seen as "living documents" was strongly supported and the Ottawa Group discussed how best it might contribute to that objective. It was agreed that the Ottawa Group would modify its "rules of engagement" to ensure that papers dealing with issues covered by one or both of the new manuals would make explicit reference to the relevant sections in the manual(s) identifying any perceived need for change. Similarly, discussions of papers at Ottawa Group meetings now seek to

include any advice concerning the manuals that might be passed on to the Intersecretariat Working Group for its consideration. The two most recent meetings of the Ottawa Group included discussions of these price index manuals. At its 2007 meeting the Ottawa Group also discussed a progress report on the development of a supplementary handbook entitled "Practical guide to compiling consumer price indexes".

12. The Ottawa Group steering committee concurs with the descriptions developed by the Intersecretariat Working Group (see the annex to the present report) of the respective roles of the Intersecretariat Working Group, the Ottawa Group and the joint ECE/ILO consumer price index meetings. The Ottawa Group steering committee consults with members of the Intersecretariat Working Group and organizers of the joint ECE/ILO consumer price index meeting to ensure appropriate coordination of meeting agendas.

13. The point of contact for the Ottawa Group is:

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Australian Bureau of Statistics
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Annex

Roles of the joint Economic Commission for Europe/ International Labour Organization consumer price index meetings, the Ottawa Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Joint Economic Commission for Europe/International Labour Organization consumer price index meetings

1. The joint ECE/ILO consumer price index meetings provide a unique opportunity for national experts to exchange views and experiences in the field of price statistics and to identify good practices. The joint meetings are the only intergovernmental meetings on consumer price indexes at a broader geographical level than the European Union, and they also offer an important forum for the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics for discussion of issues related to consumer price indexes. The joint meetings report to the ILO Bureau of Statistics and the Conference of European Statisticians.

2. The meetings focus on issues that are directly relevant for the compilation of consumer price indexes in national statistical offices. The meetings discuss all steps of the compilation process, i.e. collection, processing and dissemination of data, including also resource and organizational issues. The meetings are usually held every second year.

3. The meetings aim to discuss and make recommendations on good practices that can be implemented by the statistical offices. The agenda is demand-driven in the sense that the organizing committee decides the future agenda items on the basis of proposals from the country representatives at the joint meetings.

4. The joint meetings have been an important forum for the work on the international consumer price indexes manual published in 2004 and for feedback from countries for the revision of the electronic version of the manual.

5. In addition to the substantial topics discussed at the meetings, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ILO, the Intersecretariat Working Group, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat provide reports on activities and initiatives. This helps to ensure that the joint meeting and the country representatives are informed about the international activities on consumer price indexes.

6. The joint meetings are attended by 80 to 100 participants. In addition to experts from the national statistical offices of ECE member countries, the participants include representatives of national statistical offices in Asia, Arabic-speaking countries, Africa and South America invited by ILO. Experts from other international organizations (IMF, OECD, ILO and Eurostat) also attend the meetings, as do representatives from central banks, for example the European Central Bank, representing a main-user perspective. Some members of the Ottawa Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group also attend the meetings.

7. The joint meetings thus also provide a forum for conveying information to the Intersecretariat Working Group and other international organizations about activities, problems and needs in the compilation of consumer price indexes in

statistical offices. Reports and recommendations of the joint meetings as well as proposals for future agendas are submitted to the Intersecretariat Working Group.

Ottawa Group

8. The Ottawa Group on Price Indexes, established in 1994, provides a forum for specialists to share their experiences and discuss research on crucial problems of measuring price change. Without avoiding theoretical issues, the Group focuses on applied research, particularly in the area of consumer price indices. Participants are specialists and practitioners who work for or advise national statistical agencies or international organizations. The Ottawa Group reports to the Statistical Commission.

9. The Group aims to meet every 18 to 24 months. The meetings are attended by 20 to 40 participants from statistical offices and international organizations. The presentation of a paper is usually, but not always, required to participate at meetings.

10. The agenda is agreed by the steering committee, which at present consists of representatives from the national statistical offices of Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada and Switzerland (who will host the next meeting in 2009).

11. The Ottawa Group has played an important role in the theoretical and methodological development of price indexes during the past decade. For example, the international consumer price index and producer price index manuals, published in 2004, benefited much from work in the Group. It brings leading experts in price statistics together with practitioners from national statistical offices, which provides a unique opportunity for discussing problems associated with implementation of the recommendations in practice. Practical problems, for example caused by resource shortage, lack of reliable data sources or time constraints, are also brought to the attention of the "theorists" for clarification or recommendations.

12. Representatives of international organizations usually also participate in the Ottawa Group meetings. This helps to ensure that international organizations are up to date with the latest development in the area of price indexes.

13. For each Ottawa Group meeting, a summary, including possible conclusions and recommendations, and presented papers are available through the Group's web page www.ottawagroup.org.

Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

14. Based on the recommendation of the joint ECE/ILO meeting on consumer price indexes and at the invitation of the ILO Bureau of Statistics, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics was established in 1998 to coordinate work to develop the international standards on price statistics. The Intersecretariat Working Group reports to the Statistical Commission.

15. According to its original terms of reference (which are available at www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/index.htm), the Intersecretariat Working Group should work to develop and establish international manuals on

consumer price indexes and other price statistics, in particular producer price and international trade price indexes. The Group should also assist in the development of a framework for price statistics which is able to explain the links among various price indexes and between price indexes and other relevant economic and labour statistics.

16. The terms of reference of the Intersecretariat Working Group were revised in 2005 to take into account the development of work since 1998. The objectives in the revised terms of reference are:

(a) To develop and implement the consumer price and producer price index manuals, including revising the electronic versions of the manuals;

(b) To arrange for the establishment of standards and manuals for other price statistics, in particular export and import price indexes and real estate price indexes;

(c) To coordinate the work of international organizations in implementing best practices, sharing information on training and technical assistance and avoiding duplication of work;

(d) To assist in the development of a framework for price statistics which is able to explain the links among various price indexes and between price indexes and other relevant economic and labour statistics.

17. The Intersecretariat Working Group comprises the following organizations: IMF, ECE, ILO, OECD, Eurostat and the World Bank. The Group may invite experts to participate in its work. Experts from Australia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Canada participated in the two most recent meetings of the Group, held in May 2006 back-to-back with the joint consumer price index meeting in Geneva and in October 2007 on the day before the 10th Ottawa Group meeting.

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Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the present report to the Statistical Commission in accordance with a request of the Commission at its thirty-eighth session.** The report, prepared by the Directorate for Science, Technology, and Industry of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and by the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization elaborates the current and future plans in the area of science and technology statistics. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2008/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4* (E/2007/24), chap. I.A.

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Report prepared by the Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and by the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been produced in response to the regular request of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the status of science and technology statistics. The report outlines the current situation and highlights some challenges and selected future developments. It has been jointly prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry. There is increasing recognition of the importance of science in development, as emphasized in the reports of the Millennium Summit (2005), the Millennium Project and the Commission for Africa, to name but three recent initiatives. Statistics on science and technology are fundamental to an understanding of the processes by which development has an impact on societies and their economies, an impact which is very uneven across the world. In this report, science and technology statistics on research and development, innovation, human resources for science and technology, patents and general-purpose technologies such as biotechnology and nanotechnology are discussed. Concepts, classifications and methodologies employed in science and technology statistics need to be regularly updated to capture emerging scientific fields and technologies which may not easily fit into the existing frameworks and may be multidisciplinary (such as biotechnology and nanotechnology).

II. Modus operandi for work on science and technology statistics

A. UNESCO Institute for Statistics

2. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is the lead agency in the United Nations system for science and technology data collection. It relaunched its science and technology statistics programme in 2004 (see E/CN.3/2004/15) after a worldwide consultation with Member States and experts.[1]

3. The main lines of action of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in science and technology statistics are: survey operation and data guardianship; training and capacity-building in science and technology statistics; standard-setting and methodological development; and analysis and publications; in the framework of extensive collaboration and partnerships with national, regional and international governmental and civil-society organizations.

[1] See UNESCO Institute for Statistics strategy document UNESCO 2004, available at www.uis.unesco.org.

B. OECD

4. The work of OECD on science and technology statistics is conducted by the working party of the Committee for Science and Technology Policy, the National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators. The National Experts group is chaired by Statistics Canada and a bureau which currently includes Belgium, Finland, Italy, Japan and the United States of America. Working with the OECD secretariat, the bureau formulates a biennial schedule of projects which are reviewed, debated and prioritized by the Committee, eventually becoming part of its overall programme of work. In recent years, science and technology statistical activities have consistently ranked among the top priorities of the Committee, and science and technology methodologies, indicators and quantitative work have rated among the highest in terms of quality and impact across the whole organization. The National Experts group also conducts its own so-called Blue Sky activity to develop new indicators to respond to changing policy and user needs in the science and technology area. The latest Blue Sky II conference, held in Ottawa in September 2006,[2] reviewed progress and identified potential future work on science and technology statistics. A selection of conference papers is now part of a book entitled *Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators in a Changing World: Responding to Policy Needs*[3] aimed at the wider community. The National Experts group meets in a plenary session once a year, while task forces and workshops address, in a more focused way, particular issues. Currently task forces or ad hoc groups of the National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators are working on the internationalization of research and development, on research and development and national accounts; on research and development tax incentives; on patents statistics; on biotechnology statistics; and on the careers of doctorate holders. A new Committee working party on nanotechnology has been created. Delegates attending the National Experts' meeting represent the 30 OECD member countries, as well as five observer countries (Chile, China, Israel, the Russian Federation and South Africa), and there are also representatives from Eurostat, UNESCO, The Ibero-American Network on Science and Technology Indicators, and New Partnership for Africa's Development.

C. Other organizations

5. Eurostat has a joint research and development statistics collection with the OECD twice a year. It also collects innovation statistics by means of the Community Innovation Survey from the European Union and European Economic Area Member States, EU candidate countries and the Russian Federation. The Eurostat working party on research and development and innovation statistics is also involved in methodological work in various domains. It has worked closely with OECD in the revision of the *Oslo* and *Frascati Manuals* as well as other technical guidelines. The Community Innovation Surveys prepared and coordinated by Eurostat implement the Oslo measurement guidelines in a comparable way across EU countries. The development of the next Community Innovation Survey started in November 2007, and fieldwork will be launched in 2009.

6. Some other regions of the world have in recent years significantly improved their capacity for the production of science and technology statistics. In Latin

[2] See www.oecd.org/sti/blueskyconference.

[3] Paris, OECD, September 2007.

America, the Ibero-American Network on Science and Technology Indicators started its activities in 1995 under the auspices of the Ibero-American Program on Science and Technology for Development. The Ibero-American Network collects and publishes research and development and innovation statistics from Latin American countries, and is also active in studies relating to methodological issues and training at the regional level. In Africa, the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology has just launched its African Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators Initiative, which includes the establishment of an African Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation.

D. Publications and databases

7. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics provides research and development statistics to the United Nations Statistical Division (for the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook*), the United Nations Development Programme (*Human Development Report*), the World Bank (*World Development Indicators*) and other stakeholders. Its global research and development statistics database is available online at www.uis.unesco.org, and it has published thematic bulletins and fact sheets on topics such as the evolution of research and development expenditure in the world, the application of bibliometrics to developing countries and women in science and technology.

8. OECD publications on science and technology are available in hard copy and electronically (CD or via SourceOECD) and mirror the OECD databases. They include: the *Main Science and Technology Indicators*; *Research and Development Statistics (RDS)*, both produced biannually; and the Analytical Business Enterprise research and development database which is an analytical database where the OECD secretariat adjusts the data to correct for known anomalies and deficiencies in the official business enterprise research and development data. The Analytical Business Enterprise research and development database is produced both electronically and in hard copy form annually. Other publications in the science and technology area are the yearly Compendium of Patent Statistics and the biennial biotechnology statistics publication. In addition to these standard publications, OECD produces science and technology indicators in a number of other publications such as the *STI Scoreboard*, which provide a comprehensive picture of countries' innovation and performance in the global economy (see: www.oecd.org/sti/scoreboard).

9. For new and emerging work of both a statistical and a methodological nature, OECD increasingly uses its working papers series as a dissemination tool. Recent reports include studies on the labour characteristics and international mobility of doctorate holders, nanotechnology patents and patent nowcasting indicators (see: www.oecd.org/sti/working-papers).

10. Eurostat releases its research and development statistics under theme 9: Science and technology statistics in New Cronos.

III. Current Work & Future Challenges

11. There have been many significant changes in science statistics since the last UNESCO Institute for Statistics/OECD report to the United Nations Statistics Commission. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has established a new global collection of research and development statistics. OECD has developed a

measurement framework in the area of biotechnology and is now starting a similar endeavour in the area of nanotechnologies. The National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators also held its second decennial Blue Sky conference on science and technology indicators; started a large-scale exploitation of innovation survey microdata; and is working with national accountants to provide guidelines for the capitalization of research and development in national accounts. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD and Eurostat have worked to harmonize methodologies, survey instruments and guidance to countries. As a result, there is a much greater volume of more comparable data than at the time of the previous report in 2004. It is expected that the next few years will see further improvements in the same direction, concentrating on improving the availability of data — more variables from more countries — as well as improving data quality through more harmonized methodologies.

A. Research and development statistics

International research and development data-collection activities

12. UNESCO has been collecting science and technology statistics from its member countries since the late 1990s. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has now re-established a regular biennial global research and development survey, with the next survey planned for 2008. In order to avoid duplication in data collection, data-sharing agreements have been established with OECD, Eurostat and the Ibero-American Network. The questionnaire can be downloaded from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics website and data can be submitted electronically using a password-protected dynamic PDF questionnaire. The survey addresses 215 countries and territories, of which 138 have provided data. Most of the non-responding countries are small island developing States, or less developed countries, which often have less developed science and technology systems. The group of non-responding Arab States is also significant.

13. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics encourages countries to use the OECD Frascati international standard for research and development statistics. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics disseminates the Frascati methodology throughout the world, including its main definitions in the science and technology survey instruction manuals and discussing the details of its application in workshops. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has been collecting evidence to compile a document on how developing countries can best apply the Frascati manual to meet their needs, doing so in wide consultation with experts, regional networks and national authorities.

14. The sixth edition of the OECD *Frascati Manual*, with an emphasis on research and development in service industries, was published in 2002. The OECD has collected research and development statistics for about 40 years for its member countries, and since 1997 has collected research and development data for selected non-member economies. Currently, the non-member economies covered in the main science and technology indicators are Argentina, China, Israel, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa and Taiwan Province of China. Chile will be added in the near future.

15. In 2004, OECD and Eurostat signed a protocol of cooperation to reduce the burden on national statistical authorities by organizing a joint data collection of the research and development variables. Following that, a joint questionnaire was developed and a calendar agreed for two yearly data collections. Efforts were also

made to streamline the collection of related metadata. The ultimate objective of this exercise is for the two organizations to have databases that are fully compatible with each other.

Research and development and national accounts

16. The National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators played a key role in the latest revision of the System of National Accounts (1993, SNA) and the recent decision to change the treatment of research and development in the accounts from expenditure to investment. Research and development experts worked in cooperation with national accountants and experts in the Canberra II Group to examine practical issues relating to the implementation of this change and the requirements for constructing research and development satellite accounts, including coverage and valuation of research and development production, methods required for estimation at constant international prices, research and development imports/exports, constructing research and development stocks and estimating their depreciation, and overlaps in the data on research and development and software. The National Experts group will continue to work with the Working Party on national accounts in the preparation of a Handbook on deriving capital measures of intellectual property, which includes a chapter on research and development and the implementation of the new System of National Accounts requirements.

B. Innovation statistics and indicators

17. The latest revision of the joint OECD/Eurostat *Oslo Manual* on measuring innovation was published in 2005. The new concepts developed in the *Manual* (including marketing and organizational innovation) are now being implemented in innovation surveys across countries (including the Community innovation survey in Europe). The current *Oslo Manual* also includes an annex on Measuring innovation in developing countries developed by UNESCO with the assistance of the Ibero-American Network on Science and Technology Indicators, in consultation with experts from developing countries which have carried out innovation surveys. This annex suggests how non-OECD countries might use the *Oslo Manual* to measure the particular characteristics of innovation in their economies.

18. Eurostat launched the fourth Community Innovation Survey in 2005. Comparability of data between the third and fourth Community Innovation Surveys was improved in comparison with previous surveys. The fourth Community Innovation Surveys questionnaire was shorter and considerably less difficult than the third Community Innovation Surveys questionnaire.

19. More and more developing countries are currently collecting innovation statistics. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics hopes to launch a survey of innovation statistics in 2008.

Exploitation of innovation microdata at an international scale: the OECD innovation microdata project

20. This OECD project addresses the determinants and impacts of innovation at the firm level across countries. Its added value is its international scope: indicators and econometric estimates based on the same methodological approach were compiled in various countries so that cross-country comparisons could be conducted in a more reliable way than is possible now. The indicators include both standard

innovation indicators and more complex indicators of innovation modes and performance. The econometric analysis includes four topics: (a) innovation and productivity; (b) international technology transfer; (c) non-technological innovation; and (d) intellectual property rights. The size and industry of the business and the degree to which it is or is not multinational are taken into account. In 2006-2007, coordinated groups of experts in various countries ran similar statistical operations on their respective national microdata: cleaning, compiling indicators and applying econometric regressions. The core data came from innovation surveys, notably of the fourth Community Innovation Surveys type. This decentralized approach (whereby each national team works on its own data set) is required due to the confidential character of survey microdata sets. Results of this project and options for follow-up were discussed at two workshops in November 2007 and a report will be published in the first half of 2008.

Patent data

21. The outcomes and characteristics of research activities can also be captured by patent data. Patents have their own drawbacks, for instance, they miss out on the non-patented outcomes of the innovation process. At the OECD secretariat, work on patent statistics has focused on the following areas: (a) database, (b) methodology, (c) dissemination of patent statistics, and (d) organization of workshops on patent statistics. The OECD patent database includes patents from major patent offices in the world (Europe, Japan and the United States of America, as well as international filings, known as patent cooperation treaty applications. The database also includes data by region, industry, technical field (e.g., nanotechnology), patent holder name, and citations to patents. OECD is preparing a revised version of the patent manual, which includes documentation and guidelines for compiling patent indicators.

22. This activity is mainly supported (in terms of resources and expertise) by a task force composed of users and producers; the World Intellectual Property Organization, Eurostat, the European Commission Research Directorate General, the National Science Foundation United States of America and patent offices from Europe, Japan and the United States of America. This task force sponsored a series of patent statistics workshop that was co-organized by the OECD with the World Intellectual Property Organization and the European Patent Office. Data, indicators and methodological information are available on the OECD website: www.oecd.org/sti/ipr-statistics.

C. Biotechnology and nanotechnology

23. OECD has been developing biotechnology statistics since 2000 via its Ad Hoc Meeting on Biotechnology Statistics, working under the aegis of the National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators. The work of the Ad hoc meeting led to the development of a Framework for Biotechnology Statistics, comprising a statistical definition of biotechnology, a framework for collecting internationally comparable data on biotechnology, and a model questionnaire (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/5/48/34935605.pdf). In 2006, OECD released the 2006 edition of *OECD Biotechnology Statistics* (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/59/36760212.pdf). This edition includes data for 23 OECD countries and two observer countries, plus China (Shanghai), and represents a major step forward in improving the comparability of biotechnology indicators among countries. OECD also held two workshops on measuring the economic impacts of biotechnology (2004 and 2006). The purpose of

the 2006 workshop was to provide a forum for progress on measuring the socio-economic effects of biotechnology since the 2004 meeting, an assessment of measurement issues and an evaluation of the needs of the users of data on biotechnology impacts. Results from these three areas were then used to develop a framework for a future research programme to measure the diffusion and impacts of biotechnology.

24. An OECD Working Party on Nanotechnology was created under the Committee in Science and Technology Policy in March 2007. One of the areas under the mandate of the working party is nanotechnology statistics and measurement. The first workshop in November 2007 discussed available metrics in the area of nanotechnologies and user needs for indicators. Future steps will require the involvement of the National Experts with a view to creating an ad hoc group on nanotechnology statistics to serve the working party. The approach followed would be similar to the one used in OECD work on biotechnology statistics.

D. Human resources in science and technology

25. The migration of highly skilled people has continued to be a concern for all countries, to ensure that the most talented individuals have the greatest chance to make a contribution to the needs of all countries. In response to this, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD and Eurostat have developed a methodology to follow up on the careers of doctorate holders with the financial support of the United States National Science Foundation and of Eurostat for the EU countries. This methodology is now being widely applied in Europe and various OECD countries, as well as in some developing countries. A second data collection was launched in November 2007 and it is likely that data for some 20 countries will become available. The three partner organizations will also issue the methodology in a joint publication by the end of 2007 or beginning of 2008, to be widely promoted worldwide. If an increasing number of countries participate in this exercise, a comprehensive global database on the most talented people on the planet will be produced. While education statistics at the UNESCO Institute for Statistics give priority to basic education and the Millennium Development Goals, some attention has been given to higher education. A new data set on international student mobility was published in 2006, and UNESCO has launched the UNESCO Forum on higher education research and knowledge to coordinate information on higher education research in the knowledge society.

E. Statistical capacity-building

26. Statistical capacity-building is part of the core mandate of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics as established by UNESCO. In order to improve the availability and quality of science and technology statistics in various regions of the world, capacity-building and training are needed. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has designed and delivered an extensive series of regional workshops between 2005 and 2007, addressing science and technology statisticians in 90 countries. These workshops were carried out in partnership with UNESCO headquarters, its regional offices, regional networks, funding agencies and other interested partners.

27. Workshops have taken place involving 90 developing countries in all regions of the world. The goals were to increase the number of countries regularly producing

quality science and technology indicators; to create local capacity for the production of such indicators; to promote evidence-based science and technology policymaking; to facilitate discussion between countries, addressing problems they may have encountered; to learn about the characteristics of science and technology statistics data collection and use in countries of the same region; and to identify examples of good practice to be shared with other countries. The workshops were targeted at the statisticians who do the data collection and analysis in each country, but have also included policy and decision makers from a variety of national authorities.

28. The success of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics statistical capacity-building activities depends significantly on funding raised from external sources, as the core budget of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics received from UNESCO can contribute only limited funding to such activities. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics is reliant on extrabudgetary funding from international and bilateral organisations which support the need of developing countries for quality data to inform policy and strategies for poverty reduction, economic development and monitoring of progress towards international objectives such as the Millennium Development Goals.

IV. Conclusion

29. Since the last report to the United Nations Statistical Commission, much has changed. UNESCO has reaffirmed its position as a global agency in this field, with its global research and development survey and numerous training activities worldwide. OECD and Eurostat have published the third edition of the *Oslo Manual*. OECD and Eurostat have initiated a joint data-collection exercise of research and development statistics. The joint development of the careers of doctorate holders methodology (OECD/the UNESCO Institute for Statistics/Eurostat) has opened a new area of research in this field.

30. Cooperation between the main agencies active in this area (UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD and Eurostat) has been increasingly close, with some excellent results. Cooperation between international agencies and national statistics organizations has also been good, with active participation in both OECD and UNESCO activities. However, in developing countries, national statistics organizations are less involved in the area of science and technology statistics, with the line ministries taking the lead. National statistics organizations should be encouraged to get involved in order to improve data quality, since increasing policy emphasis on science and technology suggests a need for regular science and technology data collection in national statistical plans and strategies.

31. In many countries, increased resources are needed for the collection of timely and relevant science and technology statistics of high quality, based, where applicable, on international methodologies. The community of statisticians needs to work together to make a better case for the importance and relevance of such data.

32. International activities in this area involve multiple agencies (both international and regional), leading to risks of duplication or of varying demands for statistics. We are pleased to report that we are concentrating our efforts on cooperation and the avoidance of duplication of work in order to optimize the use of relatively scarce resources. This paper, produced jointly by UNESCO and OECD, with assistance from Eurostat, is an indication of the ongoing collaboration.

Annex

Methodological manuals and relevant documents

Type of data	*Title*
UNESCO	
Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Statistics on Science and Technology, Paris, 1978	
Manual for Statistics on Scientific and Technological Activities (ST-84/WS/12), UNESCO, Paris 1984	
"Immediate, medium- and longer-term strategy in science and technology statistics", UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal, 2003	
UNESCO Institute for Statistics website: http://www.uis.unesco.org	
OECD/Eurostat	
The Frascati family: *The Measurement of Scientific and Technological Activities* Series	
Research and development	*Frascati Manual 2002: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys of Research and Experimental Development* (OECD, 2002)
Technology balance of payments	*Manual for the Measurement and Interpretation of Technology Balance of Payments Data — TBP Manual* (OECD, 1990)
Innovation	*Oslo Manual: Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data, 3rd edition* (OECD/Eurostat, 2005)
Patents	*Using Patent Data as Science and Technology Indicators — Patent Manual 1994* (OECD, OCDE/GD(94)114, 1994b). The Manual is under revision, the new version will be published in 2008.
Science and technology personnel	*The Measurement of Human Resources Devoted to Science and Technology — Canberra Manual* (OECD, 1995)
Other methodological frameworks for science and technology	
High technology	"Revision of High-technology Sector and Product Classification" (OECD, STI Working Paper 1997/2)
Bibliometrics	"Bibliometric Indicators and Analysis of Research Systems, Methods and Examples", by Yoshiko Okubo (OECD, STI Working Paper 1997/1)
Globalization	*OECD Handbook on Economic Globalisation Indicators* (OECD, 2005)
Biotechnology	*A Framework for Biotechnology Statistics* (OECD, 2005)